Agendas, Actions, and Accountability in International Development: A Case Study of the USAID Education Strategy for 2011-2015

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Dedication

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Abstract

Beginning in 2010, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) implemented a series of institutional reforms designed to rebuild USAID as the world's premier development agency. This research examined one component of this larger reform effort, the USAID Education Strategy for 2011-2015: Opportunity Through Learning. The purpose of this research is to examine how the current agenda for basic education was determined, what actions occurred based on this agenda, and how USAID will be held accountable for results. The problem is that while new strategies are routinely developed and implemented, without accountability for results lessons learned to do not inform future policy.

The education strategy is an exemplary case study to examine USAID's redesigned approach to international development as: 1) it is the first sector strategy developed under Administrator Rajiv Shah and paved the way for future strategies, 2) it resulted in significant changes to priorities and programs in education, and 3) it represents an unprecedented commitment by USAID to be held accountable for results. This case study of the 2011 Education Strategy provides insights into USAID's new operational model and the implications the model poses for international development assistance. Lessons learned can also inform other global agendas including the design of education indicators for the Sustainable Development Goals.

The research uses a framework of agendas, actions, and accountability to analyze the political context and alternative agendas that are the drivers of strategy development and implementation at USAID. This research highlights how agendas are formulated and strategies developed, how ensuing actions depend on both bureaucratic and political processes to deliver results, and how accountability for results is an ambiguous process that has profound implications for the development agenda. Through a document review and interviews with policy specialists and technical experts at USAID, this research adds to existing research by examining and critiquing the policy processes of agendas, actions, and accountability in the context of international development, where decisions are shaped by a global set of actors and contexts.

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List of Abbreviations

ADS	Automated Directives System
BE	Basic Education
BEC	Basic Education Coalition
BRM	Office of Budget and Resource Management
CBO	Congressional Budget Office
CBJ	Congressional Budget Justification
CDCS	Country Development Cooperation Strategy
DA	Development Assistance
E3	USAID Bureau for Economic Growth, Education, and the Environment (formerly EGAT)
ED	Education
EGAT	Bureau for Economic Growth, Agriculture, and Trade (now E3)
EGRA	Early Grade Reading Assessment
EFA	Education for All
ESF	Economic Support Funds
FY	Fiscal Year
INEE	International Network for Education in Emergencies
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MSM	Multiple Streams Model
PMEP	Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Plan
PPL	USAID Bureau of Policy Planning and Learning
PPD-6	Presidential Policy Directive on Global Development
PTT	Policy Task Team
QDDR	Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review
SSA	Sub-Saharan Africa
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
U.S.	United States
WCPM	Words Correct per Minute

Chapter 1: Introduction

Overview

Imagine a city, town, or village somewhere in world where a father is sick and unable to work. He has multidrug-resistant Tuberculosis, but has not gone to the hospital because he has no money for either tests or treatment. He cannot find work in his hometown because there are few private sector jobs, and the government only hires from within their ethnic group or by requiring a bribe that he cannot afford. In his house there is no clean water or sanitation and his children are hungry because his small plot of land is no longer productive as the climate has changed. His wife would like to work, but since she never learned to read she cannot find work that will pay enough to cover the family's expenses. They have decided their youngest daughter should work at home rather than go to school. Their eldest son does go to school, but after attending school for four years he still cannot read a sentence, and the secondary school he would attend next year is located in the neighboring village and requires fees. The father may take his family to the capital city to find opportunities there, but relatives warn him that the capital is overcrowded, and life is no better.

This is not an unusual or even extreme situation in many countries where United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and other donors have development programs. With the array of challenges, how does the U.S. Government decide who to help first, which sectors take priority, and which countries should receive attention? To support education should USAID provide the child with a book, build a secondary school, teach the mother to read, or develop the capacity of the Ministry of Education to train teachers? Are other sectors such as health, food security, and climate

change a higher priority? These are seemingly impossible challenges to balance, yet each year the U.S. Government defines priorities, creates a budget, develops interventions, measures success, and reports back to the American people on results. The needs are growing, the challenges are great, and budgets shrink as expectations rise. USAID is the U.S. federal agency charged with meeting these development challenges while at the same time supporting America's diplomacy and defense goals. There has, however, been mixed reviews of USAID's ability to fulfill this role and deliver international development results within the federal government (Unger, 2011; Veillette, 2011).

Shortly after Rajiv Shah was appointed by President Barak Obama to the position of USAID Administrator in December of 2009, at a Congressional Budget Hearing Senator Leahy was not subtle in his criticism of the arrogance of USAID. USAID, he lamented, had become detached from the people it meant to serve and did little more than produce incomprehensible reports. While Senator Leahy expressed support for foreign assistance, he concluded by saying "USAID has to change its culture, change the way it does business, if it wants the kind of money that you're here asking for. If it doesn't change I will not vote for money for USAID." Senator Leahy specifically asked the newly appointed Administrator, "How are you going to restore USAID's image on Capitol Hill?" (U.S. Senate, 2010). Administrator Shah in turn promised a series of reforms and actions for which USAID would be held accountable and closed by saying, "we will be a more accountable agency, a more transparent agency, and a more effective agency" (U.S. Senate, 2010).

As the U.S. Congress continues to question the ability of USAID to deliver development results and budgets cuts threatened, the choices that USAID makes today

will have a profound impact on development outcomes in the coming years. For this reason it is critical that the discussion of agendas, actions, and accountability for USAID be held in a public forum, with both the American public as well as the recipients of development assistance better informed of how and why decisions are made and what results can be expected.

The Presidential Administration's Foreign Operations Budget request for Fiscal Year 2010 (FY10)[1] for basic education totaled over $980 million, spanned 53 countries (Appendix 1) and covered thematic areas ranging from early childhood education, primary and secondary education, support for out of school youth, adult literacy and learning, system strengthening, to decentralization efforts. In the annual Congressional Budget Justification (CBJ) for foreign assistance the USAID FY10 request highlighted the "great latitude for support to meet country priorities and complement other donor support in country and that U.S. programs stress the importance of aligning behind country-driven strategies, including education sector plans and priorities" (CBJ, 2009, p. 186). This approach decentralized and flexible approach aligned with the 2005 USAID Education Strategy and the Basic Education Earmark guidance developed by the U.S. Congress in 2009.

In February of 2011, as part of the institutional reforms promised by Administrator Shah, USAID announced a new education strategy which calls for 1) a focus on early grade reading, 2) support for higher education and vocational training, and 3) equitable access to education in crisis and conflict environments. The strategy's

[1] Fiscal Years begin on October 1 and end on September 30. Fiscal Year 2010 covers the period of October 1, 2009 to September 30, 2010.

implementation guidance requires that all basic and higher education funds committed by the U.S. Congress and programmed by USAID be directed at these three goals. The Agency planned to have Fiscal Year (FY) 2012 be a pivot year to align existing programs and design new programs, and by FY13 all education funding programmed by USAID would, absent an exception, be directed at activities that supported these goals (USAID, 2012).

This research discusses Goal One, and to a lesser extent Goal Three, of the strategy that have a direct funding stream through the congressionally appropriated Basic Education Earmark. Goal Two is supported by higher education funds, a separate funding stream, and thus not included as part of this research. The Basic Education Earmark is an annual directive from the U.S. Congress that USAID should, or in some years must, spend a certain dollar amount on basic education programs. This earmark increased steadily since 1998, and beginning in 2005 rose dramatically to a high of $924 million in 2010. This steady and mandated stream of funding meant that programs grew in size and scope over the past decade, eventually putting education as a core development objective for USAID. This study analyzes how agendas were set for basic education, the actions that were taken based on the agendas, and how USAID will be held accountable for results. The education strategy is used to illustrate the challenges of implementing reforms at USAID, defining agendas, and being held accountable for results in the dynamic context of foreign assistance reform.

Research Problem

This new approach to development, which assumes that if there is a focus on a

limited number of activities that can be measured then there will be greater impact, is an untested area of policy development. Never before has there been such focus for basic education at USAID and never before have individual USAID Missions been told with such specificity what can and cannot be done in terms of potential interventions. The 2011 USAID Education Strategy (USAID, 2011b) states that improved reading skills "will be the primary target by which we hold ourselves accountable for results in basic education" (p.10) and sets a target of improving reading skills for 100 million children in primary grades by 2015. This is a bold new direction for USAID, and with new directions come new risks and new opportunities. The problem is that while new strategies are routinely developed and targets set, there is often no accountability for results, and lessons learned to do not inform future policy (Mundy, K. 2007). King et al. (2005) describe a 50-year history of targets being used to focus political attention on priorities, but it is never clear who owns these targets, and who is responsible if targets are not met.

What are the implications for USAID as an organization, for their programs, and for their staff of being held accountable for this target, and what lessons can be learned in the process? As this is not the first education strategy at USAID, nor will it be the last, it is important to learn from each step and have that knowledge inform future strategic directions. Lessons learned can also inform the broader development community, including UN organizations and other bilateral aid organizations, of the challenges and opportunities involved when setting targets, including how accountability is highly debated in these organizations, and how actions required to achieve sustainable results can be constrained because of targets.

Research Questions

Why after so many cycles of reform, after each new effort that addresses similar challenges, after repeated calls for better focus and more accountability - complete with roadmaps for how to improve foreign assistance - does the cycle of calling for reform continue. To examine and critique the current reform process at USAID this study posed the following research questions:

1) How were agendas determined for basic education programming at USAID for the 2011 Education Strategy?
2) What actions occurred at USAID as a result of the 2011 Education Strategy?
3) How will USAID be held accountable for results?

These three questions are at the heart of the current reforms at USAID and circulate through the Agency. Through a combination of a review of publicly available USAID documents from 1982 to the present, academic literature, and interviews with key USAID personnel conducted at the midpoint of the Education Strategy, this dissertation weaves together a narrative not previously seen in the literature. Published reports on aid reform tend to have an etic perspective of looking in from the outside. USAID and other large organizations are seen as monolithic in their approaches to development. The author of this research is currently a Foreign Service Officer at USAID, is closely involved in implementing education programs overseas, and worked at USAID in Washington during the initial announcement and implementation of the strategy. While the research is based on published articles and thoughts of those interviewed, the understanding of how to frame the discussion and the questions asked are based on a

close knowledge of the education strategy development and implementation process.

Significance of the Study

This period of reform ushered in by Administrator Shah represents a critical time for USAID to move its agenda forward and provide leadership to be the premier development agency in the world. The development of policies and strategies in a time of Agency-wide restructuring has the potential to bring together multiple agendas into one window of opportunity to create the change that has widely been called for by multiple commissions and reports. The 2011 USAID Education Strategy provides direction for an investment of approximately $3.5 billion over the period of 2011 - 2015. This level of funding is not guaranteed and each year USAID must request funding from Congress. As part of the new reforms, the annual request for basic education is based on a promise of time-bound numerical results, and a new level of accountability. This research uses a case study methodology to better understand the strategy development process, how programs and priorities were impacted, and how USAID will hold itself accountable for this sizeable financial investment of the American people to improve the status of education globally.

Conceptual Frameworks

This research uses the multiple streams model (MSM), the USAID Program Cycle, and a model of Democratic Accountability to form a framework of analysis that encompasses the setting of agendas, actions, and accountability process that are part of the design and implementation of strategies. MSM, developed by John Kingdon in 1984,

defines three major streams for setting an agenda in the federal government that include problem recognition, the refining of policy proposals, and finally politics including changes in administration, national mood, and pressure campaigns. These three streams run through the federal government, each with a life of its own that is for the most part unrelated to each other at any given moment in time. But when these streams couple, when a problem is identified, a solution is available, and the politics are right a policy window will briefly open and change can occur (Kingdon, 2011). MSM focuses on the setting of an agenda and the specification of alternatives, but does not include how an authoritative choice is made, and how that choice is implemented. This study goes beyond MSM to include implementation of the strategy through the USAID Program, Cycle. The Program Cycle is a set of instructions that operationalize the processes of strategic planning, project design and implementation, and evaluation and monitoring. Lastly, a public accountability model as presented by Behn (1998; 2001) helps decipher what is meant when USAID says it will hold itself accountable for results. This model poses a question to be answered by those that advocate for democratic accountability: *How* will *who* hold *whom* accountable for producing *whose* results? This question of accountability can be especially challenging in a multi-level environment with global actors and participants. As USAID designs a new business model for development and promises to be held accountable for results, this is a question that should be asked by the U.S. Congress and answered by USAID.

Dissertation Outline

Chapter 2 reviews the origins of current reforms at USAID through a discussion

of the 2011 Education Strategy in the context of historical approaches and current reforms at USAID in basic education. As USAID does not act alone to support the global goal of increasing equitable access to quality education, other donor priorities for education are reviewed. The multiple streams model of policy analysis is reviewed to analyze how agendas are set, the Program Cycle at USAID is detailed to illustrate how changes in implementation have been introduced at USAID, and the role of public sector accountability is incorporated into the framework.

Chapter 3 provides an overview of the research design and methods, participant selection, the positionality of the researcher, and the limitations of the study. This section further develops the three research questions and how they fit into the larger framework of agendas, actions, and accountability.

Chapter 4 provides a detailed discussion of each research question and how the questinos form a framework to better understand the cycle of strategy development, implementation, and accountability. This research frames the three components as constantly interacting, where accountability impacts how programs are implemented and measured, and the individual streams of MSM can be drivers of target setting.

Chapter 5 provides a summary of the findings and implications for USAID, for setting the education agenda for the Sustainable Development Goals in 2015, and provides recommendation for goals and indicators. Recommendations for future research are explored and the chapter concludes with a discussion of how targets need to be defined as either inspirational or technical and how accountability consists of both learning and counting agendas.

Summary

This case study analyzes how agendas for basic education are set at USAID, what actions occurred based on these agendas, and how USAID is held accountable for results. These three areas; agendas, actions, and accountability, span the strategy development, implementation, and target setting process. The goal of this research is to neither praise nor pass judgment on the 2011 Education Strategy and the reforms at USAID. The purpose is rather to illuminate the process and the challenges faced by USAID as a means to bring a wider audience into the discussion of how support for basic education can best advance both U.S. and global development objectives. The goal is to inform that discussion as another cycle of problems, priorities and politics will be formally repeated soon as the current education strategy period is coming to an end and a new strategy will need to be developed, implemented, and accounted for. In addition, the UN is leading a discussion to determine what goals, indicators, and targets should be set for the post-2015 development agenda and the formation of the Sustainable Development Goals. This narrative is an honest attempt to analyze, research, and learn from what are truly interesting times in international development. USAID has been challenged by the U.S. Congress to do better, and this is a narrative of the consequences of their response to that challenge.

Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

This literature review of how agendas are set, actions taken, and accountability defined in international educational development situates the USAID 2011 Education Strategy in context of USAID reforms and the global development agenda. In addition, the literature review provides an overview of the multiple streams model of policy analysis, the new organizational processes at USAID, and the role of public sector accountability. This review of the 2011 Education Strategy provides a window into the operationalization of a call for reform that originated in the PPD-6, but is part of a 50-year history to improve foreign assistance.

U.S. Foreign Assistance Reform

In 1961, President John F. Kennedy stood before the U.S. Congress and made an impassioned appeal for the United States to take a leadership role in the world through foreign development assistance. He based his appeal on the moral imperative for the United States to be good neighbors, on the economic necessity to create strong markets overseas, and the security imperative to stop the advance of totalitarianism. To not do so would threaten the security and prosperity of the United States (Kennedy, 1961). His speech called for consolidation and focus of a myriad of federal offices and led to the creation of what is now the United States Agency for International Development.

In 2009, almost fifty years after Kennedy's speech, President Barak Obama inherited the presidency of a nation facing the greatest economic crisis since the Great Depression and fighting wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. Furthermore, many in the U.S.

public, notably the Tea Party, were increasingly skeptical of any government spending in a time of budget austerity. Despite these circumstances, President Obama stood before the United Nations General Assembly and announced the Presidential Policy Directive on Global Development (PPD-6). PPD-6 reiterates that development is a core principle of national security and is an economic and moral imperative for the United States. PPD-6 set a new tone for U.S. international development assistance by encouraging a new operational model requiring USAID to be selective in the countries where it works, be focused on a limited set of interventions to maximize impact, achieve measureable results, and support host country ownership and shared responsibility for development outcomes.

USAID has set a goal to be the premier development agency in the word and instituted a suite of reforms to achieve this goal. The current reform effort at USAID, however, is but one moment of a long history in the U.S. Government's support to the developing world and ensuing attempts to be more effective, more focused, and to deliver improved results. The call to reform foreign assistance is as old as foreign assistance itself. From the enactment of the Foreign Assistance Act in 1961 to the mid-1990s, Nowels (2007) points out that even after seven major reforms efforts in development assistance, all of which attempted major administrative overhauls how foreign assistance was delivered; the results for most reforms efforts were modest at best. One reform that did make lasting change was the New Directions Legislation of 1973. This legislation responded to a concern from the U.S. Congress that development aid was not reaching the poorest populations in the developing countries. Since many of the consequences of this reform are relevant today it is worth discussing this legislation in more detail. As

described in a Congressional Budget Office (CBO) review in 1980, the impact of the New Directions Legislation was to shift certain overseas funding accounts to support countries with the poorest populations. Development Assistance (DA), a specific type of funding account, was restructured along sectoral lines including agriculture, population, education, the environment, and energy. The result was that by 1980, 81% of funding went to countries that met poverty criterion as established by the World Bank.

Important to note is that not all foreign assistance was bound by the New Directions Legislation. Economic Support Funds (ESF) is a separate account in foreign assistance to provide budget support and development assistance to countries of political importance to the United States. Countries that receive ESF vary over time. The CBO reports that in the 1970s Vietnam received significant amounts of ESF, but by 1980 Egypt and Israel received 40% of U.S. bilateral aid. As can be seen in Appendix 1, in the FY 2010 State and USAID Congressional Budget Justification for basic education, ESF totaled $604,947,000 whereas Development Assistance totaled $363,723,000. Of this total request for ESF the countries of Egypt, Jordon, Afghanistan, and Pakistan received a total of $475,468,000, or 49% of all basic education funds. Clearly ESF funds do meet development needs, with both Pakistan and Afghanistan facing a dire situation in education, but the purpose of the funding is designated as in the U.S. strategic interest, not necessarily to meet development objectives. This division of foreign assistance into DA and ESF accounts continues to this day, as do the debates of the purpose of foreign assistance being for development and/or diplomacy.

Other reform initiatives were not timed well and were introduced as a president was leaving office or did not have adequate support in Congress. The Helping to

Enhance the Livelihood of People around the Globe (HELP) Commission report of 2007, founded by the U.S. Congress, is an example of a proposal for reform that had no direct impact on restructuring how foreign assistance is delivered. The HELP (2007) report found that U.S. foreign assistance has not changed to meet the demands of the 21st century including changing demographics, a global economy, technology, and an increased understanding of local and global environmental risks. New sources of capital have entered into international development including increased remittances, foundations, corporations, and faith based organizations that have all changed the development landscape. The HELP Commission introduced the report by stating "Our foreign assistance system is broken. We ignore this reality at our peril. The American people, and those in the developing world striving for a better life, deserve a better foreign assistance system" (p. 7). The commission called for a rewriting of the Foreign Assistance Act including the formation of a Department of Development and a new high-level mechanism within the National Security Council to coordinate development with diplomacy and defense. These ideas did not take root and there is no Department of Development, perhaps because ideas and recommendations need to come at the right time and not, as in this case, at the end of a presidential administration.

Another effort at reform, as a response to the PPD-6, is the U.S. State Department's 2010 Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review (QDDR) launched by Secretary Clinton in part to re-establish USAID as the premier development agency in the world (U.S State Department, 2010). The QDDR highlights the increasing importance of civilian power, even in a time of budget austerity across the U.S. federal government. In developing the QDDR, "State and USAID have looked for ways to

minimize costs, to maximize impact, and to ensure accountability" (p. 17). The QDDR provides the blueprint for how civilian power, the combined efforts of the U.S. State Department and USAID, can better advance U.S. national interests and support the objectives of the U.S military. As evidenced in the 2010 QDDR, foreign assistance was seen by both the State Department and the Defense Department as critical to reaching U.S. strategic goals. The challenge for USAID was to meet domestic concerns that foreign assistance was not a worthy investment during a time a national austerity, to advance strategic priorities of U.S. engagement in countries such Afghanistan, Iraq, and Pakistan, while holding true to the principles of global development compacts that emphasis host country ownership and country-led development especially for the poorest nations. This was not seen as an impossible task by Agency leadership, but rather as a challenge to change how priorities are defined, strategies developed, and foreign assistance implemented.

USAID Administrator Dr. Rajiv Shah's first annual letter in 2011 referenced President Kennedy's speeches, President Obama's vision, and the QDDR as guiding principles for reform. He committed to launching a series of reforms to change the way USAID approached development. In his letter Dr. Shah laid out his vision of change, "Rather than achieve incremental gains by following status- quo approaches, we must bend the curve of progress, devising new ways to deliver better results more quickly and more cheaply" (USAID, 2011d). The reforms are embodied in USAID Forward and the 2011-2015 USAID Policy Framework which take the development principles of the PPD-6 and QDDR and operationalize them into policies and strategies that directly impact development approaches, programming options, and standards of accountability. USAID

embarked on an ambitious agenda to change the way USAID does business and the 2011 Education Strategy is a reflection of this agenda. Education was the first sector at USAID to take on this challenge, the first to have a strategy go through the new Program Cycle, and the first strategy to have numerical time-bound targets. As explained in the Policy Framework, the education strategy would serve to "clarify the Agency's corporate position in key areas and provide Agency-wide guidance to the field" (USAID, 2011g. p. 33).

Within the United States Foreign Assistance Framework, basic education is a distinct program element of foreign assistance. In addition, the United States Congress each year requires that a certain dollar amount of foreign assistance be spent on activities that support basic education. This amount, referred to as the Basic Education Earmark (though the term directive is more accurate), has increased dramatically in the past decade, rising steadily from 103 million in 2001, to 200 million by 2005, followed by a steep rise to 924 million in 2011 (Basic Education Coalition, 2012a). The Basic Education Earmark stems directly from strong support from Congress for basic education objectives, notably from Representative Nita Lowey who has used her position on the Foreign Appropriations Committee to press for additional funds. Congress, in turn, each year in the appropriations' process weighs in on how these funds should be allocated. In 2011 USAID had basic education programs in 51 countries including in Africa, East Asia and the Pacific, Europe and Eurasia, South and Central Asia, Latin American and the Caribbean.

Important to note, is that sector strategies are more appropriately thought of as funding strategies for a sector rather than an overarching philosophical or practical

approach to education writ large. The education strategy does not require other sectors to take a particular approach to how they provide education and training as part of their programing. For example, an Agency education strategy could require that all USAID supported training across all sectors use a constructivist approach to learning; this would then impact how the Bureau for Global Health trains nurses and how the Bureau for Food Security trains farmers. USAID education strategies, however, have been developed to provide instruction and guidance for those programs funded by the U.S. Congress to support basic and higher education.

USAID Basic Education Policies and Strategies from 1982 - 2010

One of the earliest USAID policy papers on education published in 1982 (USAID, 1982) argued that education is a critical component for the growth of human capital essential for national development. USAID programs were to focus attention on increasing: 1) the efficiency with which education resources are used, 2) the quantitative and qualitative outputs of education and training investments, and 3) the effectiveness of the education and training systems in supporting economic and social development objectives. The policy paper reflected the limited funding available to achieve these goals and emphasized a support role through the development of host country systems. The approach aligned with thinking at the World Bank, where the goal of increased human capital as an objective was pervasive in education programming (Psacharopoulos, 2004). This perspective used the rates of return of earning levels based on the number of years of education completed to calculate rates of return on investments in education. Rates of return analysis determined that investing in primary grades yielded the greatest

return on investment, educating females was slightly more profitable than educating males, and that secondary education is a better investment than vocational training (Psacharopoulos, 1994). Heyneman's (2003) research found that "from 1962 to 1980 all education investments supported by the Bank required justifications on the basis of manpower demands" (p. 317). By the early 1980s, the orthodoxy of the World Bank was an established and universal model for financing education. Mundy (2002) held that these priorities fit with the larger more muscular lending practices of the World Bank to support human capital development, and these practices worked their way into host country priorities. As the world's largest lender for education, this focus on increased human capital as the goal of education directly impacted host country priorities and national directions in education reform.

In the 1980s much of the dialogue for basic education at USAID was driven by the Africa Regional Bureau to support programming in Sub-Saharan Africa. The 1988 USAID Africa Bureau Basic Education Action Plan highlighted the "positive correlation between investment in education and increased agricultural productivity, improved health status, and reduced rates of population growth (USAID, 1988. p.1). The term basic education was defined as formal education for children between the ages of 6 and 14. The action plan consisted of a decision matrix that ranked countries on a series of indicators and suggested appropriate options based on need and past performance. As outlined in the action plan, program assistance and alignment with World Bank approaches of structural adjustment would be the modality for countries with high levels of need, whereas sector support to improve efficiency would be used for high performing countries. The USAID action plan supported this model in high performing countries and

unified the approach with that of the World Bank. By the end of the 1980s this approach was questioned as the impact of the approach taken by the World Bank's emphasis to limit public spending though encouraging user fees resulted in less overall support for education, and did not deliver the promised economic results. Many studies of the World Bank's approach demonstrated that structural adjustment led to greater poverty and increased income disparity (Carnoy, 1995). For education, these policies meant not only a decrease of funds available, but also took decision making power for setting priorities away from communities as national polices were increasingly decided by international donors (Ilon, 1994). Even so the World Bank continued to emphasize the economic benefits of education and a top down approach to change, with corresponding quantitative indicators as measures of success (Mundy, 1998).

In the 1990s the conversation moved from structural adjustment to how "burgeoning transnational social movements repeatedly turn to education as a venue for demonstrating the negative impacts of globalization and the need for more effective global governance" (Mundy, 2007. p. 349). These changes had implications for how the role of education was viewed as part of international development. Social movements use education as an area of critical need – even when there may be other issues, such as poor governance that is constraining development. In this view, education is seen as a necessary component for all development. The Africa Bureau at USAID responded to this emerging trend by publishing a series of reports that moved the Agency toward more research, more support to country led development, and a view of education as holistic and beyond the confines of formal primary education. Those that were part of this movement looked at these years as a golden era where USAID provided intellectual

leadership, and programs were integrated into host country systems.

The 1998 USAID Strategic Framework for Basic Education in Africa (USAID, 1998) argued for a greater role in supporting systems and formally endorsed education as part of a holistic approach to development. While basic education was still defined by USAID in terms of formal education, the concept of education was widening and basic education was defined as "the opportunity for children, before they assume the productive and reproductive roles of adults, to learn basic literacy, numeracy, problem solving, and other learning skills and values" (p. 19). The use of informal education, non-formal education, and holistic support for education systems was being driven by a desire to widen the scope of what basic education could accomplish to support social cohesion. However, the beginnings of the debate that continues to this day, between advocates for targeted interventions at the primary level versus advocates for a big-tent approach to education programming, emerged in this strategic framework. At the end of a paragraph extolling the virtues of the big tent view is a cautionary paragraph, "it would be difficult to justify a major focus for USAID in early childhood development or in adult literacy if the majority of the primary school-aged children lacked schooling, a decent curriculum, or minimally-capable teachers" (p. 20).

Along with the regional strategies for basic education in Africa, other Regional Bureaus such as the Middle East, Europe and Eurasia, The Asia Bureau, and Latin America were developing policy and strategy papers as well as individual country strategies for basic education. In 2000, USAID added a policy paper to the Automated

Directive System (ADS)[2] that focused basic education funding toward formal primary schooling, as well as introduced the key development concepts of improving the quality of education and the importance of including girls in education programs (USAID, 2000). This marked a transition away from the Regional Bureaus taking the lead role in developing guidance and strategies for the USAID Missions and a move toward having the Education Office at the USAID Bureau for Economic Growth Agriculture and Trade (now called E3/ED), the technical bureau within USAID that housed education, take a more prominent role in developing foundational documents and providing technical direction for the agency.

By 2004, leadership within the U.S. Congress was on-board with the international consensus and agenda that basic education was fundamental to improving the lives of people in the developing world, and they were willing to appropriate additional funds to meet these goals. Congressional funding for basic education had risen to $324 million and there was increasing interest from key congressional members such as Senator Clinton and Representative Lowey to further increase funding for education. At the same time, these same members of Congress, as well as advocacy groups, were not masking their frustration with USAID that it did not have a definable strategy (Stites, 2004). The House Committee on Appropriations, as part of the FY04 appropriations bill, highlighted the recent increases in funding that was being provided to USAID and referenced as a positive trend USAID's efforts to have a consciously decentralized approach with an emphasis on country level coordination. The language in the bill then directly challenged

[2] The ADS contains the organization and functions of USAID, along with the policies and procedures that guide the Agency's programs and operations. It consists of over 200 chapters in six functional series: Agency Organization and Legal Affairs, Programming, Acquisition and Assistance, Human Resources, Management Services, and Budget and Finance.

USAID as not having "an articulated strategy on the use of basic education funds nor does it specifically address how USAID plans to manage increased funding. Such a strategy would reflect the scope of the problems (illiteracy and innumeracy) in developing countries" (U.S. House of Representatives, 2004). The committee required that the State Department issue a report with 120 days on progress and recommended setting up an inter-agency task force to develop a comprehensive education strategy for U.S. foreign assistance.

In answer to this call from the U.S. Congress for an Agency-wide education strategy, in 2005 USAID published a new strategy entitled *Improving Lives through Learning*. This strategy followed along the lines of previous strategies by calling for a focus on equitable access to quality basic education and to move beyond basic education to enhance knowledge and skills for productivity (USAID, 2005). The two objectives of the strategy are equitable access to a quality basic education and enhancing knowledge and skills for productivity in vocation and higher education. The 2005 strategy also called for a focus on areas of greatest need and to align with host country commitments. The strategy stated that the focus of basic education should be on access, especially for girls, as well as completion rates. These priorities are closely aligned with the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the goals of Education For All (EFA) for universal access to primary access. The strategy also indicates that increased quality basic education is seen as best achieved through a mix of teacher training, curriculum reform, and provision of materials. Though access to formal schooling was highlighted there was a reference that even when access and completion rates are improved, only an estimated 25% of those completing primary school in Sub-Saharan Africa were literate.

Additionally, the 2005 strategy has education in conflict and crisis environments as an emerging theme, though not given prominence as a major component. The approach to conflict focused on repatriation of young soldiers, seen as unskilled boys and young men, back into the education system where innovative non-formal approaches are seen as effective.

This strategy continued and formalized the classification of education programming into sub-sectors of primary education and vocational training. The focus of basic education funds should be on the basic skills in primary grades, but missions could at their discretion and based on assessments implement basic education programs in other areas such as secondary education, informal education for illiterate youth, and life skills training that would lead to vocational training. In practical terms, this policy gave the field missions wide latitude for programming basic education funds. With the Basic Education Earmark still increasing annually as of 2008, there were multiple stakeholders that looked beyond the 2005 strategy to define the education agenda. There was frustration from within USAID, from Congress, and with external stakeholders that something needed to be done.

The Basic Education Coalition (BEC), a coalition formed mostly of USAID implementing partners that lobbies Congress for increased support to the education sector, produced a policy paper calling for a new approach to education for at USAID. BEC called for a U.S Global Education Initiative alongside of the Presidential Initiatives of Food Security and Global Health. This coalition recommended that a global education initiative would reflect a commitment to the MDG and EFA goals, and be a blueprint for USAID to take a global leadership role (BEC, 2009). This approach called for

redirecting funds to support EFA goals including primary education, support for early childhood development, and adult literacy. The policy paper noted the linkages within basic education of learning at the primary level affecting movement into secondary school, and further progress to secondary grades. The paper called for the United States to support pooled funding with the Fast Track Initiative, and to support a list of priority areas including improved financing of education, capacity building, policy support, and better data. The paper had thoughts on the functioning of USAID as well, that "the agency's vastly diminished capacity in recent years clearly has hamstrung its impact" (p. 5) and recommended that USAID Missions take the lead on developing appropriate interventions under the direction of the Mission Director with oversight from the U.S Ambassador.

As the above reports was being developed, a subtle yet important change in USAID policy for use of the basic education earmark was presented in a 2009 document entitled: *Clarification of the Basic Education Earmark* (USAID, 2009a). By 2009 the annual Basic Education Earmark had reached 750 million per year, a seven-fold increase from a decade earlier. This clarification reinforced that basic education programs were to be defined broadly, but introduced defined types of programming that were preferred by the U.S. Congress, and which areas of education did not fall under the earmark. Primary education was a priority and workforce readiness skills, adult education, and certain life skills were supported. However, basic education funds were not to be used for workforce development skills, civic education programs, health programs, or specific skills sets such as computers and English language that is not part of a curriculum. This clarification placed boundaries on the types of programming that were allowed under the earmark, but

still allowed for flexible programming options at the mission level, where most of the decisions on education programming were made. The clarification limited certain types of youth programming related to vocational training, but allowed for a wide swath of education programming including decentralization, capacity building, system strengthening, adult education, and a full range of support for primary and secondary grades.

In 2008, EGAT/ED embarked on a process to develop a strategy that would more clearly define the goals of the sector and bring together a consensus document between a wide range of stakeholders from within and outside of USAID. This commitment to a broad consensus and use of evidence to guide priorities was seen as lacking in the 2005 education strategy. To gather feedback on what were the priorities for the sector EGAT/ED contracted the Aguirre Division of JBS International, a contractor under the Global Evaluation and Monitoring Task Order, to interview key stakeholders and sector experts from both within USAID and the wider development community. Key findings of the report include a desire for a defined strategic objective for the sector and a request for implementation guidance and toolkits to assist field officers to carry out their duties. Among the recommendations were requests to balance guidance with allowing flexibility in programming options, to take a holistic approach toward education, and guidance on how to link education with other sub-sectors such as health and economic growth.

The report divided USAID education priorities into basic education, workforce development, and higher education. Gender, youth and conflict were crosscutting issues for the above three subsectors. In the report the definition of basic education included all aspects of education from early-childhood development, to secondary education, to

lifelong learning, and life skills. The final proposed consensus goal for USAID was drafted as: developing foundational skills for learning, citizenship, and work. This approach allowed Missions to choose the type of programming they viewed as the most effective to contribute to this goal statement. The recommendations allowed a full range of options for education programming to be decided at the mission level (USAID, 2009b).

By the fall of 2010, the Basic Education Earmark was at an all-time high and the sector had just undergone a two-year strategy development process that resulted in a final draft that was waiting for review and approval by the Agency's next Administrator. Education was a prominent focus of development in strategic priority countries such as Afghanistan, Pakistan, Egypt, and Jordon and high on the agenda across Africa. In addition, new Foreign Service Education Officers were being hired as part of the Development Leadership Initiative to increase the technical capacity of the Agency. At this same moment, however, a series of reforms initiated by President Obama would impact how education fit within larger presidential priorities and expectations for USAID, and change the shape and direction of the education sector.

USAID 2011-2015 Education Strategy

The 2011-2015 Education Strategy: Opportunity through Learning was announced in February of 2011. The strategy was commissioned by USAID Administrator Rajiv Shah to ensure that investments in education would be informed by the Presidential Policy Directive on Global Development. In the strategy, education is described as foundational to human development and critical to economic growth and a

catalyst for democracy and improved health outcomes. The strategy describes the state of global education as poor, citing statistics that more than 70 million school-aged children do not have access to schooling, and of those that attend hundreds of millions are not learning basic skills. The commitment of the U.S. Government is highlighted in the strategy to achieving the EFA targets and MDGs for universal primary education and gender equity for girls and boys. The strategy not only offered support for existing global targets, but also announced new priorities and time-bound numerical targets for which USAID will be held accountable:

- Goal One: Improved reading skills for 100 million children in primary grades by 2015;
- Goal Two: Improved ability of tertiary and workforce development programs to produce a workforce with relevant skills to support country development goals by 2015; and
- Goal Three: Increased equitable access to education in crisis and conflict environments for 15 million learners by 2015.

These goals align, in part, to the six internationally agreed upon UNESCO EFA goals which aim to meet the learning needs of all children, youth and adults by 2015. The strategy provides a rationale for choosing these three goals, gives examples of activities in an illustrative framework, and adds the cross-cutting issues of youth, gender, learners with disabilities, and donor integration as areas to consider when programming toward these goals. The strategy promised a "roadmap for implementation" within two months to provide more detailed guidance to field Missions on how USAID would operationalize the directives of the strategy. Specific areas were identified, such as early childhood learning and adult literacy, which would no longer be considered as part of

USAID's strategic core and would not be seen in USAID programs during the strategy period. Also mentioned is that programs in Afghanistan and Pakistan alone account for over 40% of all resources dedicated to basic education programming.

The unprecedented changes in this strategy were the addition of global, numerical, and time bound targets and the requirement to focus on specific activities that contribute to these targets to the expressed exclusion of all other activities. Never before had education resources been committed with promises of measurable gains in such specific terms within an identified timeframe. The strategy also provided common indicators for reporting that would be aggregated from county level data to report on progress toward the Agency's corporate goals.

- Goal One Indicator: Percentage change in proportion of students in primary grades who, after two years of schooling, demonstrate sufficient reading fluency and comprehension to "read to learn."
- Goal Two Indicator: Percentage change in proportion of tertiary and workforce development programs producing workforce with relevant skills that support country development goals.
- Goal Three Indicator: Percentage change in Primary Net Enrollment Rate.

Targets were framed in the context of what is possible to control while working at a global scale and provided a caveat that "it is important to note that the numerical targets associated with the first and third goals are premised on results achieved in recent years, on the assumption of host country commitment to stipulated targets, and on continued access to sufficient resources. If the resource envelope for basic education funding changes, the achievement of the stipulated targets will likely be affected" (USAID, 2011b, p.16). Meeting these targets would depend not only on USAID commitments, but

the commitments of host country governments and other donors, as well as continued robust support from Congress. USAID committed to being held accountable, within a stipulation that some conditions are beyond the control of the agency.

The Education Strategy Implementation Guidance, Technical notes, and Research Notes (hereafter referred to as the Guidance) finalized in April of 2012, 14 months after the education strategy was announced, provided guidance to both USAID mission staff and implementing partners on how to program toward the strategy's goals and measure progress (USAID, 2012). The Guidance, presented at a public event held in Washington D.C. answered several remaining questions for strategy implementation such as, which specific funding would be used for the goals and how numerical targets were defined and counted. The Guidance, available on the USAID website, articulates that basic education funding is to be used for the numerical targets of Goals One and Three only, while higher education funding is to be used for Goal Two. This left it very clear that youth programs, adult literacy programs, science programs for secondary schools, and other such areas where USAID had a long history of engagement were to be closed and redesigned as soon as possible, or supported with funding other than basic education. As stated in the Guidance, "in the absence of a formal exception request, all FY12 basic education funds that are not currently part of an award should be programmed in support of transition to the new Education Strategy and all FY13 education funds should be aligned with the strategy" (p. 4). Existing programs using FY13 funds and beyond were to be ended or redesigned to align to the new strategy.

The Guidance identified areas where further consensus is required, and detailed specific roles and responsibilities for the USAID missions, Regional Bureaus, and

Technical Bureaus for how to implement the strategy. This is a critical component of the strategy as roles, authorities, and responsibilities were all impacted by these new requirements. Appendix 2 provides an organizational chart and description of the bureaucratic divisions within as defined in the Automated Directives System (ADS) Chapter 101. An abbreviated description of the Offices and Bureaus most relevant to the strategy are:

- *The Administrator (AID/A)* formulates and executes U.S. foreign development assistance policies and programs under the guidance of the President
- *The Office of Budget and Resource Management (BRM)* is responsible for budget decisions informed by policies, strategies, and the expected impact on outcomes.
- *The Bureau for Policy, Planning and Learning (PPL)* leads the Agency's policy planning efforts, shaping overall strategic and program planning processes.
- *The Bureau for Economic Growth, Education and the Environment (E3)* provides a central Agency focus for the design, review, coordination, and evaluation of worldwide activities.
- *E3/Education (E3/ED)* mandate spans the policies and programs involved in providing all educational services at the basic, secondary, and tertiary levels.
- *E3/ED/Basic Education* (E3/ED/BE) provides technical expertise and guidance on the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of basic education.
- *Regional Bureaus* work directly with overseas field missions to provide technical support and lead the implementation of the USAID Education Strategy.
- *Field Offices Overseas (or Missions)* are usually located within the U.S. Embassy USAID missions are under the authority of the U.S. Ambassador for that country.

Each management unit has both distinct and overlapping roles and responsibilities in terms of strategy implementation. E3 is responsible for technical support, such as producing the implementation guidance, while the education offices of the regional bureaus work directly with each mission. However, there is the expectation of the USAID Administrator that once a strategy or policy is approved at the central level, that all units will work together on implementation. Given the complexity of the relationships within USAID, as well as at Missions with the U.S. Ambassador and other U.S. Government offices, host country governments, and civil society organizations, implementation will have unique challenges in each Mission.

The Strategy and the Guidance sent a clear message, this was not business as usual. Business as usual was that education strategies at USAID, either at the global or regional level, presented an encyclopedia of possible interventions while education agendas and alternatives were decided at the mission level. Agendas and resulting actions were to be based on country development plans or on a variety of other factors such as expertise at the mission and historical support for certain sectors. Now, under this new strategy, mission level programs had to be designed or redesigned to align with the strategy, an exception had to be granted, or funding would be shifted to a different country. This strategy marked the start of a new era for the education sector at USAID.

Donor Priorities in Basic Education

The USAID 2011- 2015 Education Strategy was not developed in a vacuum, isolated from other trends and events, and can be seen as a continuum of change that responded to events both within and outside of the Agency. Article 26 of the Universal

Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 first presented the principles of free and compulsory education in the elementary stages for all as a right that everybody shared. This was not a target to be achieved, rather an expectation for humanity along with the other articles in the declaration. There was no direction connection made to improved economic outcomes, better health, or lower fertility rates; just a statement that what we now call primary education is a right for everyone. Targets were added to this goal gradually over the coming 50 years, with the first language appearing that there should be universal primary education by a certain date coming out of UNESCO conferences in the 1960s (King 2005). The 1980s saw an increasing focus on the importance of access to education culminating in the Jomtien conference in 1990 and the goals of Education for All. Compacts with defined targets, such as the Dakar Framework for Action and the Millennium Development Goals agreed to in 2000, have increased focus on global accountability and results. The MDGs in particular used long-term targets to introduce the concept of collective accountability for achieving universally definable results.

There are multifaceted purposes of global compacts and targets; as a method to track investments, to give direction and focus to development efforts, to mobilize people and resources, and to give a sense of seriousness of commitment. The MDGs brought attention to issues of access to primary education and gender equity in education and remain the focus of how is the global community is, or is not, meeting their commitments. There can however be unintended consequences when targets are seen and pursued as ends in themselves (Jansen, 2005). King (2005) refers to targets as the world's development agenda, where the more measurable quantitative targets have taken precedence over the highly contextual country-led approaches. These country-led

approaches may include a host of qualitative indicators and approaches not directly aligned with the global compacts. Targets then become part of approaches to assistance, whether embedded in Poverty Reduction Strategies, Sector Wide Approaches, direct budget assistance, or project based assistance. The targets set at a global level work their way into the way in which development objectives are funded, delivered, and measured. This sets up a contrast of agendas between global compacts with time-bound targets and country development plans that may have a different agendas or timeframe for results.

As example of this is when the United Nations Secretary-General appointed former British Prime Minister Gordon Brown to the position of United Nations Special Envoy for Global Education in 2012, he called for a final push to 2015 to enroll the remaining 61 million children in school and ensuring a quality education. A goal, he said that "will not be easy – but it is a goal which, working together, we can achieve" (United Nations, 2012). Clearly in the space of three years the intractable issues of access to quality primary education in Pakistan, Nigeria, and South Sudan, a few of many countries that facing intractable access challenges, will not be resolved. This is an example of a target statement that is not expected to be met, rather an exercise in agenda setting to reconfirm commitment to a goal. Targets designed to be met and targets meant to inspire need to be developed, phrased, and measured differently.

Another implication of the MDGs, and the targets associated with access to primary education, is that other components of the education system receive less importance, which in the long term can damage education systems. Lewin (2005) argued that most countries in Sub-Saharan Africa have yet to develop comprehensive plans for secondary education in part because of the focus on meeting the MDG goal for universal

access to primary education. A sustainable and country-led plan, as an example, may focus less on the universal component of access to primary education, and instead work to develop an education system that has a strong secondary education system which then creates the next generation of teachers. Heyneman (2003; 2010) reviewed World Bank lending strategies that used targets in the form of forecasting and rates of return on investments to drive lending for the education sector. Their lending was significant enough to distort a balanced education system by discouraging investments in certain sectors, such as higher education. Heyneman labels EFA a failure and the focus of primary education a 'fetish' of the donor community. Accounting for a relatively small percentage, the total investment in education that comes from the donor community has driven a focus not on education systems but on access. He goes further to criticize the focus on measurable learning outcomes as ignoring social cohesion as a central purpose of public education. Focusing on improved reading in primary grades as a singular goal, as an example, is especially problematic in post-conflict environments where questions of language of instruction need to have a conflict sensitive lens rather than a focus on learning outcomes only.

Targets, as simultaneously a tool to focus attention and drivers of how assistance is implemented, raise a question of supporting country led development while meeting formalized global compacts and targets. Fukuyama (2004) makes the case that there is an inherent contradiction in donor policies that want "both to increase the local government's capacity to provide a particular service, like irrigation, public health, or primary education, and to actually provide those services to end user" (p.40). The goal of a donor is often to work toward both objectives simultaneously of capacity building and

direct service delivery. But by providing services in a time-bound manner to meet donor objectives often requires setting up the same institutions outside of the government structure. Working through the host government, as advocated in many reform recommendations as the sustainable solution to development challenges, may pose barriers to reach time-bound numerical goals as capacity and consensus building at the local level that can take years if not decades. The UN initiative Education First is an example an attempt to speed up results to meet an artificial deadline. It is hard to argue against a goal to get all children in school by 2015, but to meet that target host country systems may not move fast enough, nor may host countries consider meeting the deadline their immediate priority, unless of course it is tied to continued, or additive, funding from donors.

Donor Coordination

The Paris Declaration of 2005 and the Busan Declaration of 2011 called upon donors to coordinate development strategies and support country led development plans. In addition to USAID, three major global donors in education, the Development Agency for the United Kingdom (DFID), the World Bank, and the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) have almost simultaneously undergone strategy development for education, arriving at very similar conclusions on the importance of measuring gains in learning beyond just ensuring access to education.

DFID's strategy, Learning For All: DFID's Education Strategy 2010–2015, has goals to expand access with a focus on conflict environments, to improve the quality especially in early grade literacy and numeracy, and to provide appropriate skills to

young people. This approach closely aligns with the three goals of the USAID strategy. The metrics used are primarily input measures including number of school supported, number of teachers trained, and number of classrooms constructed. Learning is mentioned as a goal, but specific targets and metrics for measuring learning gains are not introduced.

In 2011 the World Bank published their 10-year strategy: Learning for All - Investing in People's Knowledge and Skills to Promote Development. This strategy moves beyond Education for All to ensuring that at all stages of learning be measured and improved. This strategy focused on two priority areas including support for education systems and building a global knowledge base. The strategy highlighted the importance of ensuring learning happens in the early grades, but emphasized that learning was a life-long process. The strategy also listed a series of indicators that mostly focused on system reforms, but had one outcome indicator directly related to improved learning: "% of countries (or beneficiaries in countries) with increases in measured learning or skills since 2010 (or since the earliest available baseline)" (World Bank, 2011, p. 10).

GPE is a multilateral partnership that pools donor funds to support education in a select list of developing countries, currently totaling 66 recipient nations. GPE is a follow on to the World Bank's Education for All - Fast Track Initiative that pooled donor funding to support countries at risk of not meeting the MDGs for education. The pledging conferences held by GPE in 2011 and 2014, as well as the GPE 2012 - 2015 strategy, indicate priorities and set targets to be achieved. The pledging conferences call on donor and recipient countries to commit both financial resources and a promise of reform at the country level to achieve the goals set by GPE. In the November 2011

replenishment conference held in Copenhagen GPE framed their call for donors to support future funding for GPE within a series of targets. At this conference on November 8, 2011, the head of GPE secretariat, delivered a pledge that GPE will among other targets, "cut in half the number of non-readers in at least 20 countries over the next five years" and "reduce the number of out-of-school children by 25 million and increase primary school completion rates by at least 7.5% over five years." (GPE, 2011, p. 24). In the introduction to the report the pledge was phrased differently. There it stated that GPE would "reduce by 50% of number of grade three children that cannot read in 20 counties by 2015 and enroll and "halve the population of out-of-school children" with no timeframe provided. If focused on the phrasing and numbers, these targets may sound similar, but the measurement metrics are dramatically different. The reading pledges are either for third graders or for all non-readers, and the out of school targets are either a finite count of children, or a percentage of a flexible number.

In 2012 the Global Partnership for Education published their strategy for 2012 – 2015. This strategy sets four target areas including: 1) access for all with a focus on pre-primary education, 2) learning for all with a focus on improving reading and numeracy in the early grades, 3) equitable access in conflict affected states, and 4) support for national systems. Goals Two and Three overlap with the USAID strategy, with the GPE indicators being similar as well. The GPE strategy seeks to have a "dramatic increase" in the number of children able to read as measured by the indicator: "The proportion of students who, by grade 3, demonstrate that they can read and understand the meaning of grade-level text" (GPE, 2012a, p.38). Within a year of the initial pledge used to have donors commit funds, the goal statement was changed from a specific target to a call for a

dramatic increase.

In November of 2012, a year after the initial pledge was made and a new strategy announced, GPE issued the first of an annual; *Result for Learning Report* (GPE, 2012b). This report measured the progress toward the targets and commitments in recipient country education sector plans. These reports, however, focused on country level progress. The targets presented by GPE as part of their pledge to encourage donor contributions and the targets in the strategy were absent from the report. In 2013, Alice Albright was brought on as the new Chief Executive Officer for GPE. That year a second progress report was issued that again ignored the pledges made at the 2011 replenishment conference. In June of 2014, two journalists reviewing GPE in the lead up to the 2014 replenishment conference noted that the 2011 promises have not been addressed, let alone measured by GPE, and that an unidentified senior staff member at GPE said that "nobody talks about them anymore" (Schemo & Clark, 2014, para. 9).

In June of 2014 the GPE secretariat once again went to donor countries to request additive funds for support to education sector plans. In the final report from the June 2014 replenishment conference there was no review of progress toward the earlier pledges, no mention of the earlier promises, and no reference to the 2012 - 2015 strategy. The conference was however viewed as an "outstanding success, both in securing domestic finance commitments from developing country partners and being well on the way to raising $3.5 billion from donors for 2015-2018" (GPE, 2014, p. 8). With the new pledges of funding came a new set of targets. GPE now promised that with U.S. $3.5 billion from 2015 to 2018, they can achieve outcomes in 66 eligible countries that include: "an increase of core reading and numeracy skills by 25% (from 16 to 20 million

between 2014 and 2018)" and to "support the annual school cost of 29 million children in primary and lower-secondary school; 23 million will be in fragile and conflict-affected states children" (p. 8,9). This will require a new set of metrics from the previous targets, and again will require a global data call to define and measure progress in core skills. The literacy and numeracy target also implies that baseline data currently exists in all 66 GPE countries.

There is a stated desire in these strategies to move past the promise of 'Education for All' to a 'Learning for All' agenda, and a heightened sense that lack of access in conflict environments is a challenge that still needs to be directly addressed. These three strategies, as well as the USAID strategy, developed by the major donors in education are seen as representing donor coordination that is unprecedented. The strategies focus on achieving measureable results in collaboration with host country development plans and have a clear timetable for success. USAID, GPE, DFID and the World Bank are united in a call for data, a focus on learning and access, and support for host country priorities alignment with global priorities. Literacy and numeracy, however, are measured using different metrics: GPE's focus is on grade three, USAID after two years of primary school, DFID in the early grades, and the World Bank increases in learning broadly defined. Each donor will require a baseline and ongoing data collection to show progress, meaning each host country will then need to allow testing and publication of data for analysis and review. If targets are measured through collection of data, then producing these data will not be optional.

EFA and the MDGs have forever changed the conversation about the importance of support for primary education, and the central role education plays in human capital

development, economic prosperity, and increased social cohesion as just a few of the societal benefits that can be attributed to increased access to quality primary education. This unity of purpose is both lauded as unprecedented coordination and criticized as being yet another period of donors setting priorities for host countries. This time priorities are determined through the setting of targets that impact what will, and just as importantly what will not, be funded. From the perspective of critical scholars, a changing agenda can be seen as reflecting dominant political thought at the time. There is an established perspective that the influx of aid and external conditions have harmed, not helped, the development of the education systems in recipient countries.

Critical scholars have illustrated the neo-liberal agenda, as seen in structural adjustment policies, as linked with the Washington Consensus. The Washington Consensus is a term that appeared in 1989 and refers to a process of ten specific economic prescriptions advocated by the major International Financial Institutions where support for development is tied to specific fiscal and monetary policies. Neo-liberal policies call for cutting back on government services, expansion of domestic market forces, and advocating for user fees. Critics of this approach to supporting education systems have pointed out that these policies resulted in greater, not less, disparity and inefficiency (Klees, 2008).

As 2015 approaches and the timeframe of the current global targets end a new set of targets will inevitably be developed. The next set of goals and targets will come with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), currently being discussed through the Open Working Group of the General Assembly on Sustainable Development Goals. This working group is charged with developing the post-MDG international development

agenda. In draft form there are currently 17 goals including Goal One: End poverty in all its forms everywhere, Goal Two: to end hunger, Goal Three: to ensure healthy lives, and Goal Four: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all (UN, 2014). As a component of each goal are a series of targets to be achieved by 2030. Supporting the education goal are 10 targets, most of which are very broad and seek to ensure that by 2030 all children have access to early childhood education, primary and secondary education, that children with disabilities are included in education, and that workforce development education leads to employment. There is one notable education target for literacy yet to be quantified: 4.6 - By 2030, ensure that all youth and at least [x] per cent of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy.

The final version of these targets will be the learning agenda for the next 15 years, as such it will be important to define what is being measured, how it will be measured, and how this will impact both donor and host country priorities. In the case of literacy the move towards a global learning agenda represents a potential for hegemonic practices in which host countries will be bound to follow donor dictates for language acquisition. The setting of global targets of progress will impact how reading is taught, how standards are set for reading at grade level, and how progress will be measured. The drafting of the SDGs has the potential to not learn from the past and assume that global compacts inherently support host country sector strategies by providing a vision that is universal. Host countries then need to adapt their approach to improving education to meet the myriad of agenda and targets established by donors.

Agendas: The Multiple Streams Model

For this study the multiple layers of competing agendas and priorities will be analyzed through the multiple streams of problems, policies, and politics. Kingdon's model is often referenced by scholars only in terms of the three streams; overlooked is the development of the model as series of case studies of a federal bureaucracy. This is one reason the framework is appropriate for this research. MSM also provides a flexible architecture to understand the process of policy formation and agenda setting. Using a holistic perspective, MSM views the dynamics of policy development as the result of many forces, some that may be stronger than others at a given point in time, and it brings clarity to a chaotic series of events. MSM defines the strategy formation process and setting of agendas as dynamic, yet these random pieces and flows of information form a narrative of how a specific alternative can rise to the top of the agenda. While the focus on reading of the USAID 2011 Education Strategy seemed to appear out of nowhere, leaving even people close the strategy development at a loss to explain how the final goals and targets where chosen, there were a series of explainable and traceable events that led to the final strategy document.

MSM includes three separate streams concerned with policy making: the problem stream, the political stream, and the policy stream. These are described as the three major process streams in the federal government. Components of the problem stream include the issues that need to be addressed, the political stream includes the political environment, public opinion, and political forces in government, and the policy stream is composed of ideas and solutions that have been developed by experts and are waiting for an opportunity to be implemented. As described by Kingdon (2011), "separate streams

run through the organization, each with a life of its own. These streams are coupled at critical junctures and that coupling produces the greatest agenda change" (p.87). Changes in policy only occur when a window of opportunity opens and the streams are "coupled" by policy entrepreneurs at an opportune moment. If the three streams are not coupled, or a policy entrepreneur is not present, then the window of opportunity for coupling will be lost and there will be no authoritative decision.

Much of the research that uses MSM focuses on the analysis of the three streams and coupling, whereas MSM provides a much richer perspective when used to analyze this process within the federal government. Participants in government are themselves players in the game and should not be overlooked. The agencies of the federal government may seem monolithic, but they are composed of individuals assuming roles of elected officials, political appointees, congressional staffers, civil servants, and technical experts. Each position has a distinct role in the formation of an agenda and varies in significance in how agendas are ultimately formed. While conducting research on health and transportation sectors in the U.S. Government, Kingdon (2011) found that the administration, meaning the president and his staff, could dominate the agenda if they so choose, but were unable to control the alternative being considered. Kingdon's research found that political appointees, on the other hand, were considered as very or somewhat important in 82% of the interviews in their ability to control alternative policies and proposed solutions. Political appointees at USAID are spread throughout the Agency, not only is the Administrator appointed by the president, but political appointees are brought on with each new presidential administration including assistant administrators and senior advisors. Political appointees can elevate issues within their

own agency and are in a position to have considerable influence over the setting of agendas. Kingdon noted that one respondent remarked how political appointees get a little "history happy" and want to "put their stamp on something" (p.30). This desire, given their short tenure, can produce an atmosphere of wanting results quickly while that person is still in the position, even if that person will not be there when the results are finalized. Their influence has a direct impact on what gets on the agenda and what policy solutions are considered acceptable alternatives. This desire to put a stamp on results also impacts how targets are set and strategies implemented.

In contrast to political appointees are civil servants. At USAID this includes much of the workforce including those based in Washington D.C. as well as Foreign Service Officers overseas. One might expect that those that are permanently based at an agency would have considerable leverage in setting the agenda; however Kindgon found that civil servants were not as influential as political appointees. What power does lay with the civil servants, often referred to as bureaucrats, is implementation and the definition of alternatives once an agenda has been set. The bureaucrats research problems and specify alternatives, but it is only if they have the ear of a political appointee can they get on issue on the agenda. What bureaucrats lack in the ability to set an agenda, Kingdon argues, they more than compensate for in endurance, expertise, and relationships with Congress and advocacy groups. Bureaucrats, along with their ideas and passions, are there for the long term, they look at a slow and steady rise within an agency and this impacts how the political appointees are able to implement their agenda.

Kingdon found that of the respondents in his study, 91% found that Congress was important in setting agendas even though as a body it consists of 535 people with

separate agendas and different constituencies. Agendas prominent for the presidential administration will get nowhere without the support of Congress. Political appointees are frequently brought before Congress to explain and defend their actions, and to justify their budgets. It is the U.S Congress that has legal authority to fund activities or cut appropriations. Congress can hold hearings and delay funding until questions are answered to their satisfactions through congressional holds. USAID must notify Congress how it intends to spend funds, and if that intention changes a Change Notice is sent to Congress where no action can take place until all concerns raised by Congress are addressed or the change notice expires after a set period of time.

While Congress is close to the center of agenda setting and alternative specification, as is the presidential administration and bureaucrats that endure throughout, no one group can dominate the process of setting an agenda and choosing alternatives. That dynamic is embedded into how the U.S. Government functions, and directly impacts the streams of problems, policies, and politics. In his research on bureaucracies, Wilson (2000) defines the federal government as a system that was "not designed to be efficient or powerful, but malleable and tolerable" (p. 376). What this means for the multiple streams is that there may be waterfalls of dramatic change with the changing of a presidential administration or a new congress, but the lasting effects may well be more permanent from the slow evolutionary erosion and sedimentation of bureaucracy.

Actions: The Challenges of Implementation

What can be garnered from USAID strategies and reports is best defined as an institutional analysis, where different part of the bureaucracy react in predictable ways,

contribute as defined by their role in the organization, and strategies and policies result from these processes. This type of analysis encompasses the "basic norms, rules, conventions, habits and values of a society" (Hollingsworth, 2000, p. 601) that are the most enduring facets of on organization. The PPD-6 and the QDDR provided the umbrella framework for USAID reform efforts and detail how these enduring components of the institution must now work together. The outcome of the QDDR is a set of organization and procedural changes at USAID embodied in USAID Forward. USAID Forward consists of seven key areas including: Implementation and procurement reform to create partnerships in the countries where the Agency works; the rebuilding of policy capacity through the creation of a new Bureau of Policy, Planning and Learning (PPL) designed to be the intellectual center for the Agency; and rebuilding budget management to ensure resources will be aligned with country strategies and resources reprogrammed toward sectors that are demonstrating meaningful results. The other four components of USAID Forward are talent management, monitoring and evaluation, science and technology, and innovation (USAID, 2010).

USAID is an expansive government bureaucracy, divided into regional bureaus and technical sectors with staff based in missions around the world. Leading the Agency is the Office of the Administrator. Supporting the Administrator are six administrative offices and eight technical bureaus including the Bureau for Education, Economic Growth and the Environment and the Bureau of Policy Planning and Learning. The world is divided into six administrative regions: Africa, the Middle East, Asia, Europe and Eurasia, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Afghanistan/Pakistan. USAID also manages three Presidential Initiatives: Global Health, the Global Climate Change

Initiative, and Feed the Future. Initiatives announced by the Administrator Shah include Power Africa and the G8 New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition. The organizational structure of USAID, the roles of each office, and the policies involved with implementation of the entire program cycle is found in ADS 200 and is included in Appendix 2.

It is important to highlight the central role that the Automated Directives System plays in the daily operation of USAID. The ADS contains the organizational core functions of USAID including legal, programming guidance, human resource, acquisition and assistance, and budget authorities. If a question or disagreement arises while designing new programs, or if an exception to a policy is needed, the ADS is the definitive source of regulations for USAID. In practice, for a Mission it means that the daily operations including the rules that govern procurement and planning are clearly defined in the ADS. Unique to the 2011 Education Strategy, unlike previous education strategies, is that the strategy is a component of a larger Agency initiative to have policies and strategies be incorporated into a systemic change in how the Agency programs foreign assistance, and this change has been enshrined in the ADS.

The changes brought about by the PPD-6 extend well beyond the bureaucratic structure of USAID and extend to the State Department and every U.S. agency engaged in diplomacy and development across the world. The extent of the reforms, and how the reforms were meant to change the processes by which strategies, budgets, and operational procedures for foreign assistance, is to be incorporated into the operating structures of all U.S. Embassies is seen in the unclassified ALDAC (All Diplomatic and Consular Posts) cable from December of 2011. This cable from Deputy Secretary of State Nides was sent

to all Ambassadors, Assistant Secretaries, Assistance Administrators, USAID Mission Directors and Agency Heads at U.S Embassies abroad. The subject title, Introducing New Strategic Planning and Budgeting Processes, spells out in great detail how the reforms have created "significant changes to our strategic planning and budget formulation processes to help us do our business better, faster, and smarter (ALDAC, 2011, para. 1). The ALDAC describes a series of changes of how strategies and budgets of the State Department and USAID are to be coordinated and objectives integrated. The ALDAC specifically references the CDCS and the Program Cycle as the process which will operationalize the PPD-6. This ALDAC is critical for a USAID Mission Director that answers to both the U.S. Ambassador at an embassy, and the USAID Assistant Administrator representing their respective region. This clear directive, that the USAID reforms are policies that must be adhered to by Ambassadors, supported Missions to make the difficult choices required to transition to the new education strategy.

The section above, detailing the bureaucratic structure of USAID, is important to include as any new direction taken by USAID, any new reform or grand statement of change, has to pass through a large and cumbersome bureaucracy. Administrators that wish to implement reforms often start with setting a goal to give a sense of mission to an organization, and to clarify a sense of purpose. The USAID strategies used this approach to implement the new reforms. Wilson (2000), however, describes attempts to clarify goals in bureaucracies as resulting "either in the production of meaningless verbiage or the exposure of deep disagreements" (p.260) and these goals do little to clarify what is needed to be done next. Primary goals are not the only ones that an agency must address; there are also contextual goals, or a "desired state of affairs other than the one the agency

was brought into being to create" (p. 129) that impact how a primary goal can be achieved. Embedded in a goal to improve results in development, are goals for reform internal to the operating structure and environment of an organization.

USAID is not a business, but an international development agency with multiple mandates that need to be factored in when reviewing what is both possible and probable. If, as an example, the only goal was to improve the reading skills of 100 million children on a cost reimbursable basis, USAID could focus on high population countries with relatively functional governments such as India, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Ethiopia, and China. In this scenario, the goal could more possibly be reached with the funding available and USAID could go to Congress and more confidently say that for X dollars they will produce Y results. The reality for USAID is, however, that in addition to the goals of the education strategy there are a multitude of auxiliary goals that must be met as part of the implementation process. These include not only diplomatic goals that must align with U.S. strategic interests, but also procurement goals such as an increase in the percentage of dollars that go to small and minority owned businesses. Or as part of USAID Forward, a series of procurement reforms were introduced to increase the total number of awards made to host country governments and local institutions. There are targets and indicators for the total of funds per-year implemented through local systems and the total value of private/public partnerships. While these indicators are by no means exclusive of achieving results of the strategy, they are another set of agendas that is unique to the federal government and have an accountability process beyond the discreet goals as defined in a strategy.

The Program Cycle

The Bureau of Policy, Planning, and Learning was created to bring back to USAID the intellectual leadership that had been moved the State Department with the creation of the F Bureau in 2006. The F Bureau was formed to consolidate the strategy and budget process of State and USAID to better align diplomacy and development. USAID was required by State to suspend any strategy development at the country and regional levels, as this was now to be controlled by State (Government Accountability Office, 2009). In 2010, as part the QDDR, budget and strategic authority was returned to USAID and are now vested in PPL and the Office Budget and Resource Management (BRM). Or, as described by the former Deputy Administrator Donald Steinberg at a speech presenting the education strategy to the World Bank, "before PPL USAID was like the Wizard of Oz, we had courage, we had heart, but we didn't exactly have a brain" (Steinberg, 2011). Central to this effort to bring back intellectual leadership is the USAID Program Cycle. This is a continuous cycle designed to develop policy and strategies at the central level, have Missions incorporate agency strategies into their Country Development Cooperation Strategies (CDCS), develop and implement effective programs, and learn through monitoring and evaluation. Learning from evaluations leads to revised strategies and the cycle continues. PPL refers to the Program Cycle as the "discipline of development" where all the activities of implementing foreign assistance are ultimately focused on results (USAID, 2011e). As articulated through the Program Cycle, this discipline is a systematic framework integrating each project into mission level goals that in turn achieve corporate objectives. The individual stages of the Program Cycle outlined below are described in detail in ADS 200, 201, and 203. For

Missions, these steps are mandatory instructions that must be followed when programming foreign assistance; from developing a concept paper, to procurement of an award, to evaluation of a project.

USAID Program Cycle

To maximize results, all parts of the Program Cycle must be rigorous and integrated.

Agency Policies and Strategies, in alignment with higher-level policies, such as the PPD-6 and QDDR, determine which global development challenges should be addressed. CDCSs define what development results are to be achieved and explain why these results will have a strategic impact.

Project Design identifies how best to achieve those results and what tools to use. Evaluation and Monitoring, supported by broader Learning and Adapting approaches, provide evidence and data as to whether the intended impact was achieved and why, ultimately informing future policy direction, the budget, and the other core components of the Program Cycle (USAID, 2011e).

Though not discussed in these terms in the USAID guidance for the Program Cycle, the word discipline has two distinct meanings. The first meaning of discipline is the systematic practice of training of people to obey rules or norms, and using punishment to correct disobedience. The second meaning is a branch of learning or scholarly instruction often associated with instituted of higher education. In the first meaning, the discipline of development would be a system of controls set in place to ensure that rules and instructions are followed and that there would be consequences for not aligning behavior to the rules. In this definition discipline is control, and actions are

judged by how well rules are followed. The second definition involves shared knowledge and expertise to solve development challenges. Both of these meanings can be seen in the Program Cycle, where mandatory instructions are encoded in the ADS and programs must align with higher level policies. These policies, however, are designed based on rigorous analysis and an evaluation of programs. The interpretation of what is meant by the word discipline will vary depending on the stage of the Program Cycle and ones' position within the bureaucracy. Developing a strategy should require academic discipline, whereas implementing a program requires obedience to strategies to avoid negative consequences such as having funding cut for programs that do not align to a strategy.

In 2010, PPL formed Policy Task Teams to develop policies and strategies in areas such as climate change, countering violent extremism, youth, gender, water, and education (Appendix 3). Policies detail priorities, but do not set specific numerical targets. Strategies, however, set overall targets, at times explicit numerical targets within a specific time-bound period, and have a more direct impact on budget and resource decisions than do policies. The first approved USAID policy was the January 2011 Evaluation Policy which outlined new requirements for when and why programs should be evaluated and set a target of three percent of program budgets of an operating unit to be set aside for external evaluations (USAID, 2011c). The first approved Agency strategy was the 2011 Education Strategy released in February of 2011. As the Agency would soon learn; implementing this strategy required a significant revision of the how the bureaucracy of USAID incorporates strategies into the norms of the Agency, how programs are designed, and how results are measured.

Country Development Cooperation Strategies (CDCS)

As outlined in the QDDR, each USAID Mission by the end of 2014 is required to develop a CDCS to prioritize investments and detail the Mission's priorities over a five-year period. A CDCS must, in part, support U.S. foreign policy priorities; ensure strategic alignment with host country development priorities and incorporate USAID's agency-level policies and strategies (USAID, 2011a). The process of developing a CDCS requires a Mission to formulate a "sound development hypothesis that describes the theory of change, logic, and causal relationships between the building blocks needed to achieve a long-term goal" (ADS 201, 2014, p. 13). Each CDCS must include a Results Framework which places each program within the context of the Development Objectives (DO) and Intermediate Results (IR) for the mission's goals for the next five years. Appendix 4 provides an example CDCS from Kyrgyzstan where increased early grade literacy (IR2.2) supports the goal of increased utilization of quality public services by all citizens (IR2), which will lead to improved service delivery and policies for all citizens (DO2) which is considered as a requirement for the overall goal of a democratic, well-governed, and prosperous Kyrgyz Republic. The CDCS is the nexus where global strategies meet local development priorities and each activity at the Mission is required to be connected to a higher-level corporate objective.

In the example above, Kyrgyzstan has early grade literacy as part of democracy goals, in Uganda reading is used to support health objectives, and in Tanzania early grade reading improves life-long learning that in turns empowers women and youth. Each Mission uses the analysis conducted during the CDCS design to fit the directives of

global education strategy into their country-led results framework. Once approved, a CDCS will guide development priorities and budgets for the ensuing five years. If primary grade reading, in a stable environment, is not seen by the host country as a priority, then education will not be a part of the CDCS and the Mission should close education programs.

Project Design and Implementation

Missions' operationalize the CDCS through a process of project design. ADS 200 (2014) defines a project as a "set of executed interventions or activities, over an established timeframe and budget, identified through a design process that is intended to achieve a discrete development result by solving an associated problem" (p. 24). A project must fit into the causal logic of the CDCS's Results Framework, thereby contributing to an intermediate result, which then aggregates up to achieving a Development Objective. ADS 201 described the mandatory steps involved in designing a project including three stages; conceptual, analytic, and approval. The conceptual stage requires a clear definition of the problem and how it is linked to the CDCS Results Framework, the design team then brings in relevant assessments and key stakeholders resulting in a formal concept paper for review by the Mission Director. Once a concept paper is approved, staff at the mission conduct a series of analyses including the three mandatory analyses of gender, environmental impact, and sustainability. A Project Appraisal Document is then designed that includes a summary of the project, types of contracting mechanisms expected to be used, and a summary financial plan and cost estimate.

While some may view these bureaucratic procedures as mundane, it is important to incorporate the time and resources required to transition to a new strategy into expectations for results. The Education Strategy required that within a year non-aligned programs be redesigned and/or new programs designed under the strategy. This required that each new activity undergo the process described above. These procedures change the way an education officer at a Mission views the development landscape. Designing interventions to solve development problems no longer entails looking for windows of opportunity based primarily on the development context and host country priorities. In the Program Cycle the role of the education officer is to design programs that meet host country needs and produce results that contribute to pre-defined Agency targets.

Evaluation and Monitoring

As part of project design, ADS 203 details Agency guidance for how projects must be monitored and evaluated. Performance monitoring uses indicators to measure progress toward expected results, where an evaluation is the collection and analysis of information that could be used to inform decisions about future programming. ADS 203 provides an extensive description of how a Mission is to incorporate a Performance Monitoring Plan as part of each discrete project, as well as a monitoring plan for the CDCS for each stage of the Results Framework. This process ensures that the performance of each project is not only measured as a discrete activity, but that the project contributes to higher-level objectives within the Mission. A Mission may use an independent contractor to pull together data sources to measure progress, or measure progress using indictors specifically developed for the CDCS.

Budgets

Budgets have critical importance for understanding priorities and timeframes at USAID. Each year USAID is working with a minimum of three budget cycles; the previous year that must be accounted for, the current year that is being implemented, and the following year that is being planned for. For example the process of formulating the FY11 budget would start in FY09 with Missions submitting requests that are compiled by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). OMB then prepares the Congressional Budget Justification (CBJ). The CBJ includes a budget and narrative which describes priorities and is submitted to Congress. The heads of separate agencies then appear before congressional committees to defend and explain the budget request. After additional rounds of discussion funds are then appropriated, and for USAID these funds are typically put into contracts, grants, and cooperative agreements.

The CBJ, submitted annually by the U.S. President to Congress, is one proxy to determine what is meant by “sufficient resources” needed to reach the targets of the 2011 Education Strategy. The CBJ reflects the annual request by USAID for financial resources per sector and is comparable data over the life of the strategy from FY 2011 to FY 2015. Secretary Kerry described the 2014 CBJ as reflection of priorities and hard choices in a difficult fiscal environment, and introduced the request with a quote from Vice President Biden, "Don't tell me what you value - show me your budget, and I'll tell you what you value" (U.S. State Department, 2013, p. 1).

There is, however, an important caveat when using the CBJ as a proxy for commitment. The CBJ represents the annual budget request by USAID, but the amounts

requested per sector reflect a desire of USAID to have the same top-line budget, with smaller directive from Congress per sector thus creating more flexibility for USAID to decide on priorities. For that reason, each year the USAID Administrator goes to Congress typically requesting a lower level of basic education funding than was obligated the previous year. Each year, in turn, USAID is criticized by members of Congress and advocacy groups such as the Basic Education Coalition for requesting lower funding amounts and not being committed to basic education. Wilson (2000) describes this as a battle for turf, where "budgets that threaten to reduce agency autonomy are often, but not always, resisted" (p. 183). The CBJ is, therefore, best viewed as comparable data over time as it includes both a narrative and budget figure for the life of the strategy, but not as a direct reflection of the USAID's commitment, or lack thereof, to basic education.

The CBJ for FY11, submitted in 2010 prior to the education strategy, uses broad language to describe priorities for the education sector. The narrative for the FY12 CBJ submitted in February of 2011, the same month that the 2011 Education Strategy was announced, focuses on primary grade reading and access in conflict and crisis environment, but without the numerical targets. For Fiscal Years 2013 – 2015, the language used in the CBJ remained almost identical: "The majority of education funding is for basic education, with a primary focus on reading acquisition in primary grades to achieve the goal of improving reading skills for 100 million children by 2015. The strategy also prioritizes increased equitable access to basic educational services for 15 million learners by 2015 in conflict or crisis contexts" (CBJ, 2015). Based on the language in the CBJ, USAID justifies its annual budget allocation for basic education from Congress in terms of the education strategy's numerical targets. In strict

accountability terms, if the U.S Congress provides USAID with X dollars for basic education, USAID projects, and has promised to be held accountable for, Y results. In this case the Y is the number of children with improved reading skills and the number of learners with improved access in crisis and conflict environments.

Accountability: Holders and Holdees

The call to hold public officials accountable is an enduring foundation of the relationship between the U.S. Government and the public. However, the type of accountability has changed overtime from holding the government accountable for addressing issues of corruption and nepotism, to accountability for performance results (Behn, 2001). Administrator Shah made accountability for results a key element of reform efforts across the Agency. As such, it is important to review the literature of accountability specific to public institutions to better understand the meaning and implications of the statement that USAID will hold itself accountable for results.

Behn (2001) details accountability through a lens of accountability holders and accountability holdees and sets a paradigm for democratic accountability using examples from the Federal Government to guide his framework. This accountability framework was developed, as was the MSM, within the context of the U.S. Federal Government and is appropriate to analyze how USAID will be held accountable for results. In a review of the European Union governance structures, Bovens (2007) sees accountability similar to Behn's view as a relationship between an actor and a forum, where they actor must explain and justify actions to the forum. The forum in turn can pass judgment and impost consequences.

The definition of the word accountable is often connected to words such as answerable, responsible, liable, or justifiable. In a policy setting, being accountable can be defined as "the extent to which one must answer to a higher authority – legal or organizational – for one's actions at large or within one's organizational position (Behn, p. 4). Behn poses a question to be answered for democratic accountability; "*How* will *who* hold *whom* accountable for producing *whose* results?" Within that question of democratic accountability for performance are four interrelated questions:

1. Who will decide what results are to be produced?
2. Who is accountable for producing these results?
3. Who is responsible for implementing the accountability process?
4. How will that accountability process work? (p. 63)

These questions can be especially challenging in a multi-level environment with global actors and participants. In the case of foreign assistance accountability for results will depend on a multitude of actors including host countries and other donors, most of which would be beyond the control of the U.S. Government, yet their participation is critical to achieving results. As the education strategy states that increases in reading gains will be the primary form of accountability for results, this becomes a metric that flows through the four questions for accountability.

This relationship between USAID and a higher authority, in this case the U.S. Congress, is evident in testimony in front of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs. When Administrator Shah went before the House to defend the 2013 CBJ, he was repeatedly asked by Representative Lowey for an explanation of why funding requests were so low for basic education. Representative

Lowey pressed further and wanted to know why education was not a core objective for USAID in the 2011 Policy Framework. This framework, part of a strategic planning exercise to closely track with the QDDR, highlighted seven core objectives that are closely aligned to the priorities of the Obama Administration including the presidential initiatives of Food Security, Global Health, and Climate Change. The four other priorities areas in the Policy Framework are Economic Growth, Democracy, Humanitarian Assistance, and responding to conflict and crisis. Education was placed under the economic growth objective where, "USAID's Education Strategy, with its focus on primary school literacy and skills building, will plant critical seeds for long-term growth" (USAID 2011g. p. 23). The Policy Framework also highlighted the contribution that education has in responding to and preventing conflict and that the 15 million learners that gain access to schooling would include those with disabilities. Administrator Shah responded to Representative Lowey that education should be a core objective and that it would be added to the Policy Framework. The following year the Policy Framework had an eighth objective added – education. This exchange (excerpts included as Appendix 5) helps illustrate who answers to whom, but left ambiguous is how and for what would USAID be held accountable.

For the 2011 Education Strategy, the first question both the *who* and the *what* appears to be decided: the Policy Task Team that developed the education strategy set numerical targets and indictors for basic education and declared that these were the results for which USAID was to be held accountable. The setting of targets, however, sets off a chain reaction of events to meet those targets, including a reporting process that requires compliance in order to count results. An implication of having a top-line target

includes having the structures in place to account for those results, and the discipline to ensure compliance. Andrew Natsios, USAID Administrator from 2001-2006, described the concept of a counter-bureaucracy within USAID whose sole mission was accountability, but that this accountability was damaging to the Agency. "One of the little understood, but powerful and disruptive tensions in established aid agencies lies in the clash between the compliance side of aid programs and the technical, program side" (Natsios, 2010, p.2).

Natsios sets the forces of accountability and control in opposition to good development, where the compliance officer clashes with the technical officer in an attempt to measure development progress. When compliance takes precedence over a desired technical approach it "ignores a central pillar of development theory, that those development programs that are most precisely and easily measured are the least transformational, and those programs that are most transformational are the least measurable" (p.3). The decision of what results are to be measured looks at the compliance side of the agency, while not taking into consideration a vast array of activities that are producing results not easily measured such as capacity building in a ministry, or engaging the community. Accountability processes, then, may fall into the trap of measuring what is easy to measure, without looking at what are the auxiliary results for development.

For the second question, *who is accountable* for producing results, the first line of accountability comes at the project or activity level. One of the most frequent ways that U.S. Government development funds are programmed is through U.S. based contractors. Implementing partners are often U.S. based non-profit organizations, or for-profit

development companies, that win awards from USAID to achieve discreet objectives. USAID holds itself accountable for producing results by holding its implementing partners accountable for producing results promised as part of the procurement process. Contractors respond to a request for proposals that often have a specific funding levels and a defined period of implementation, often four to five years. As part of their proposal, target setting is often required and there is pressure to propose ambitious targets to increase the chance of receiving the award (Chapman, 2006). Upon receipt of an award the contractor will be asked to develop a workplan and a corresponding Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (PMEP). The details of the PMEP will vary depending upon the requirement of the initial award, but will often include input indicators such as the number of teachers trained, or the number of students reached by project activities. This reporting can either use custom indicators that are developed for the project, or use what are called F-Standard Foreign Assistance (F) indicators. F indicators began in 2006 as part of the formation of the F Bureau at the State Department and measure inputs and outputs for results that are both directly and indirectly attributed to U.S. Government funding. F indicators are compiled into a global database which then aggregates data produced by U.S. Government projects in all region of the world. There is a master indicator list that consists of over 500 separate indicators that measure everything from combatting weapons of mass destruction to the number of children that receive Vitamin A due to U.S Government assistance. For most USAID projects, accountability is determined as being able to account for what was accomplished project by project as determined by the indicators. To address who is accountable, the second question in the framework, implementing partners are responsible at the country level for

producing the results for F-standard indicators that are then aggregated globally.

The third question, *who is responsible* for implementing the accountability process becomes a collective effort. USAID Missions hold implementing partners accountable for results, though this process in the past has broken down. Chapman (2009) conducted an analysis of USAID's assistance to basic education in the developing world from 1990–2005. The study examined 33 projects during this time period and specifically asked how well these projects performed, and what lessons can be learned to shape future USAID programming. The study found that while increasing education quality was a constant theme, few projects were able to demonstrate actual gains in learning. Projects were held accountable for the inputs into education, but even these targets when not reached did not impact the perceived success of the project. Many projects achieved the political goal of showing support for the host country, but accountability for results was lacking. The conclusion is that there was systemic over-promising of results in the design phase as well overstated results as part of the evaluations. These results were then unquestioned by USAID.

Chapman's study documented a pattern between an Agency that wanted results, and a culture of contactors willing to provide promises of high returns with no accountability for results. The problem can be as much as with the expectations as with the results. Performance may not always be an issue; rather the initial expectations were unrealistic thus making a successful project seem as a failure. "As long as inflated promises are seen as a necessary strategy for securing funds and project approval and to the extent that there is no serious consequence for consistent failure to achieve inflated promises, such strategies will likely persist" (Chapman, 2009, p.278). In what may be the most serious

criticism, this study found that USAID as an organization was unable to learn from experience and the mistakes continued. One lesson that could have been learned from this study is that "small gains in student achievement emerging from a multi-million dollar project may be the hard truth of development" (p. 278). Unless USAID is responsible for implementing an accountability process and are willing to learn from the results, there may not be a need to have a process to start with.

The fourth question, *how will the accountability process work*, is perhaps the trickiest for foreign assistance and the relationship between account-holders and holdees becomes central to the process. In a traditional paradigm of democratic accountability, the answer is more straightforward; elected officials implement policy and if citizens are unhappy with the implementation and results of that policy that can express their voice through a ballot. In international development there is no direct accountability relationship between the host country government, or the direct recipients such as parents or teachers that receive assistance, and USAID. Wenar (2006) defines how in international development this lack of accountability exists between the people of a county and the government, as well as between the government and international donors. "The power of any collection of poor people to penalize any collection of rich people for generating insufficient or ineffective development aid is virtually zero" (p. 4). Beyond this, a government may feel more accountable to donors than to their own citizens, becoming less able to take independent political action as seen in the discussion of structural adjustment policies and the ability to control a national agenda for education.

In the case of USAID the receivers of the assistance have no, or at best limited, ability to hold USAID accountable for results. This leaves the question of how the

accountability process will work unanswered. When the USAID Administer states that USAID will be held responsible for results, it is not clear who exactly is charged with holding the agency responsible and whom the agency holds responsible. If the countries where USAID works cannot hold USAID accountable who should and who can? The U.S. Congress has the 'power of the purse' and can limit funding, but that would not serve to improve results, one of the purposes of accountability. With results being at the center of the Program Cycle, not knowing the accountability process for results leaves open the core question; what does is mean for USAID to say that it will hold itself accountable to specific targets as set out in the strategy?

Summary

This chapter reviewed the changing purposes and priorities of foreign assistance over the past 50 years and highlighted efforts to improve effectiveness and to measure results. Beginning with the declaration of basic education as a human right there has been steady movement to quantify and define a global education agenda and to develop metrics to measure progress. The ensuing focus on primary education has been both praised as a global cause that lifted millions out of poverty, and criticized as a donor fetish resulting in structural damage of host country education systems. This review highlights changing strategies that reflect both the dominant political thinking at the time, and the changing conditions in the host countries where USAID has development programs. This perspective, that there are both positive and unintended negative consequences when the global community drives a local agenda, is important to remember so lessons learned inform future strategies.

The major international donors for international education have found consensus of purpose, to ensure learning, but still have yet to put forward a unified approach and agenda. USAID is determined to be focused and selective in where they work, and to show results. This goal has significantly impacting programming and how decisions are made within the Agency. Yet there are still unanswered questions as to how USAID will be held accountable and by whom. This question of accountability, a promise of the new reform efforts at USAID, is still not answered, leaving open how success will be measured and how the current reforms will ultimately result in improved development outcomes at the local levels.

Chapter 3: Research Design & Methods

This research is a qualitative case study that analyzes and discusses agendas, actions, and accountability at USAID to understand how development approaches and priorities changed at USAID as a result of current reform efforts. The multiple streams model helped guide interview questions and follow-on queries to draw out what the interviewees saw as the problems the strategy attempted to address, alternatives that were presented, and politics that led to an authoritative solution. The interviews also brought issues of implementation and accountability, requiring a view beyond Kingdon's framework to include a close look at the bureaucratic processes of USAID, and a at model of democratic accountability.

This study design gathered data to answer the following questions:

1. How were agendas determined for basic education programming at USAID for the 2011 Education Strategy?
2. What actions occurred within USAID as a result of the 2011 Education Strategy?
3. How will USAID be held accountable for results?

This study includes an analysis of 44 USAID Missions through a review of approved CDCSs' to inform how the education strategy was integrated into mission priorities. The combination of interviews, documents, and a personal perspective allowed the researcher to compose a narrative of how agendas were chosen, how it impacted actions taken at USAID to implement the agenda, and how USAID can be held accountable for results. By nature of its design, this research will not be generalizable to

all strategies developed as part of USAID reform efforts, rather the goal is to "expand and generalize theories (analytic generalization) and to not enumerate frequencies (statistical generalization)" (Yin, 2003, p.10). Using a single-case design of the 2011 Education Strategy is appropriate as the strategy is the first approved Agency strategy as part of reforms under Administrator Shah and directly impacted how subsequent strategies were developed, implemented, and incorporated into USAID's new model of development.

Methodology and Rationale

A qualitative case study is appropriate in this situation as the research is designed to illustrate and understand a set of relationships between different actors in a policy process. According to Maxwell (2005) the strength of a qualitative study derives "primarily from its inductive approach, its focus on specific situations or people, and its emphasis on words rather than numbers" (p. 22). The validity of the study is determined by how the final account accurately reflects the thoughts and intentions as stated by the participants. Additionally, in this situation the lens of the researcher is a viewpoint for establishing this validity based on prolonged engagement in the research setting. The interviews, documentation, and personal experience of the researcher support validity as an additional data point is used (Creswell, 2000). This research documents the history and context of past education strategies and reviews the current USAID Education Strategy using interviews and public documents. Interviews with USAID education officers and subject matter experts provide an emic (internal to the organization) perspective on the development of education programming over the last decade leading up to the current strategy.

An important aspect of validity is for the researcher to acknowledge the beliefs and bias that may influence and shape the inquiry. Acknowledging postionality, that research is not an immaculate truth immune from interpretation and needs to be deconstructed as part of the research design, supports validity (Lincoln, 1995). The presumption of "detachment and author objectivity are barriers to quality, not insurance of having achieved it" (p. 280). The researcher is a USAID Foreign Service Officer backstopping education. As such the positionality of the researcher will have an impact on the relationship with the study participants, as well as provide access to information not publicly available. This emic perspective allowed the researcher to analyze the interview and written data with an in-depth awareness of the context and policy issues that have driven the strategy's development and implementation.

What stood out in the interviews was the seriousness of the interviewees toward their work in international development. To a person, those interviewed were passionate about the importance of their work and all had a view of the strategy that they wanted to share as nobody had previously asked. The role of the researcher is to tell their story in a way that reflects their perspective in relationship to the larger research questions. Mitigating any negative impacts caused by this positionality included ensuring confidentiality through the removal of names and positions of the participants. Each participant is identified by category, such as 'member of the PTT' or 'technical expert', and as such responses will not be connected to their name or position within the agency. Formal protocol was also established where the study purpose was stated, participants were told that they did not have to answer questions if they did not want to, and were free to end the interview at any time. The respondents were engaged in the conversations, and

wanted to make sure that they provided thoughtful answers. This conversation style led to discussions of subject areas, such as accountability, that were not in the research framework at the start of the study.

Participant Selection

Participants in the interviews included employees from differing parts of USAID that play key roles as identified by the multiple streams model including career civil servants, subject matter specialists, and policy entrepreneurs. The purposeful sample of ten interview participants of USAID personnel was designed to have a comprehensive view of the education strategy development and implementation. Each category of participant had a unique and influential impact on the strategy. Interviews were held with members of the education Policy Task Team, management at E3/ED, experts that developed previous strategies, USAID technical experts for Goal One and Goal Three, heads of Regional Bureaus' education teams, and with education policy and measurement experts. Participants included six personnel that designed previous USAID strategies, two representatives from the education Policy Task Team (PTT), two technical experts for Goals One and Three, four basic education team members and management staff at E3, a monitoring and evaluation expert, a new Foreign Service officer, two policy experts, and three representatives from Regional Bureaus. The total by category is greater than the number of interviewees as many fit more than one category. This selection of participants resulted in a comprehensive perspective of the formation of agendas, discussion of how the strategy was implemented, and instigated the discussion of accountability.

Data Collection and Analysis

Data were collected during face-to-face interviews during January/February of 2013. All participants were asked for permission to record the interviews. (See Appendix 6 for the research protocol). Each interview lasted 60 to 90 minutes and the interviews were transcribed for later analysis. Using data collected from the interviews, themes were identified across interviews to follow the strategy development through the multiple streams as outlined in the MSM. Themes included categories of problems, conditions, alternatives, solutions, politics, targets, and accountability. Use of the multiple streams model helped to create a narrative of how agendas formed, alternatives suggested, decisions made, and change occurred. Issues of accountability arose during the interviews and subsequent research as an important and unaddressed topic. The researcher was motived to further investigate concepts of accountability as those implementing the strategy did not have a sense of what an accountability process would look like, or the role that accountability plays in the current reforms at USAID. Individual statements were corroborated through a review of documents that confirmed their comments. An example of this corroboration is the assertion of several respondents that many basic education programs did not change as a result of the strategy. Programs instead were presented differently by changing how success is measured. This was also found in the CDCSs where not all basic education programs had a reading focus, but all used reading gains as the primary measure for results. Finally, the lens of the researcher that was involved in strategy implementation and results tracking as a USAID Foreign Service Officer provided a valuable perspective to analyze data.

Limitations

This study reviews a strategy that has been recently developed and is still currently being implemented. There is not an extended period of time to measure how agendas will change over time and in different development contexts. The participants raised questions of accountability for the strategy, but it is still too soon to answer how USAID will ultimately be held accountable for results. The benefits of reviewing a strategy in the early stages of implementation are the timeliness of the research to inform the follow on process of the next education strategy and be used as a guide for other sector strategies either recently approved or in process.

As this is a qualitative analysis using a limited number of participants, selection bias will be a legitimate area for concern. This potential threat was reduced by targeting the interviews to those with specific knowledge of the topics being discussed and are chosen as representatives of positions in the agency, not for particular views. Since the goal is to analyze viewpoints of key stakeholders and not portray a statistical representation, selection bias as planned for, is not seen as a limiting factor for research validity. This can be addressed in future research by interviewing staff at Missions, political appointees, congressional staff, advocacy groups, implementing partners, and key host country stakeholders such as staff in Ministries of Education and at schools, and parents of children that attend USAID supported schools. The review was focused on how the agendas were determined and implemented at the central level, but there are still many unanswered questions of the resulting agendas and actions at the Mission level.

Chapter 4: Research Findings

How did improving reading skills for primary grade children and increasing equitable access to education in conflict and crisis environments rise to the top of the agenda for basic education at USAID? The multiple streams model fits seemingly disparate pieces of information into an understandable flow of events. This flow of events illustrates how the reading and conflict agendas were chosen and how these alternatives became the issues upon which USAID decided to focus attention.

The review of the literature highlights that through many iterations of strategy development over the past three decades for basic education the focus has consistently been to support access to quality education, usually primary education. Access has been determined by the number of children attending school and quality determined by measuring inputs such as the number of teachers trained or books printed (Chapman, 2009). USAID policy and strategy documents from 1982, 1998, 2000, 2005, and the unpublished 2008 education strategy outlined in the literature review, however, do not document the debates and contentious issues of the time. The literature does not include what the competing agendas were, what alternatives were discussed, and how a final decision was made. This is not only true for USAID, King (2005) notes how very little research has been done on how the MDGs were established and agreed upon as well. This is an unfortunate omission in the literature as establishing how priorities are chosen and targets are set is important knowledge that can inform the development of future strategies and targets. The interviews conducted for this study provide a narrative of the strategy development process that can be used to inform the next round of discussions as

USAID develops a follow-on education strategy. The lessons learned from the development of the 2011 Education Strategy can also inform the discussion as the global community develops the post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals.

Agendas: Defining Priorities and Alternatives

A new era of support for education as a global goal began with the adoption of the Education For All goals in 1990. The MDGs quantified this goal in 2000. EFA introduced a global compact for education of shared accountability between donors and host countries, and the MDGs set a series of goals with targets to be met by 2015 including universal access to primary education and gender equality. This was designed to be a commitment of governments, donors, and civil society organizations to work together to bring education to every person, in every society, in every country.

At the turn of the century at USAID there was no global education strategy. The Africa Bureau with the largest funding of any region in the Agency did have a strategy that was formalized in 1998. The focus was on a holistic support for education including systems strengthening and support for host country priorities. Interviewees discussed the period in detail, with one technical expert calling it a golden age for innovative programming. It was a big tent strategy, where education officers at USAID Missions had significant control over agendas at the country level. They had a mandate to conduct research and the latitude to develop programs independently based on the country context. By 2000, within USAID, there a push to have a more focused strategy that would directly support the MDGs and thus be focused on formal primary education. According to those involved, the process in 2000 was contentious and the strategy never

formally approved. Through the lens of MSM there was no coupling of problems identified with policies put forward, and no political pressure to bring to resolution this debate of focus versus big tent approaches. There were also no overarching reforms at USAID leaving the questions of alternatives decided at the country level.

In 2001, with the arrival of USAID Administrator Andrew Natsios, every sector was asked to develop a new strategy. For education, this reopened and formalized the debate that continues to this day. As expressed in one interview and reiterated in several more, when designing the next education strategy "again there were a lot of the same contentious issues between those who wanted a very focused strategy, and those that wanted a big tent strategy." Once again, a focused strategy meant primarily supporting formal primary education, whereas a big tent strategy meant a much broader conceptualization of education to include all aspects of education and lifelong learning. Congress was increasing funds for basic education and expressed a desire for more focus. Interest groups pushed for more support for specific causes and approaches such as increasing opportunities for youth, gender equity and support for girls' education, and inclusive education for learners with disabilities (BEC 2009). Multiple sets of problems and conditions were pushing the strategy development process.

By 2003 USAID was still developing a strategy within this environment of no unity in the sector to set priorities, but instructions from the Administrator to produce a strategy. EGAT/ED had been working on this new strategy for over a year with little or no progress, and the process itself created increasing tension within and between the technical offices and regional bureaus. According to every single interviewee that was involved it was a divisive process that left no one satisfied. One interviewee described

the meetings within USAID as shouting matches between staff members where no progress was made. There was a visceral reaction from respondents when describing this period that over almost a decade later was not forgotten. Then, in late 2003, the USAID Bureau for Programs and Policy Coordination took over the process and without wide discussion and not directly involving the sector as a whole, developed and finalized the 2005 USAID Education Strategy: Improving Lives Through Learning. This strategy left the status-quo in place and while encouraging a focus on formal primary education, still allowed a big tent approach. Without political leadership the streams did not couple and the existing norm of having decentralized decision-making remained intact. A staff member from E3/ED management described in an interview of being called up to Congress on several occasions and told by congressional staffers that they were not happy with the 2005 strategy. The problem of a lack of focus and clarity on results had not been resolved. By 2009 EGAT/ED staff and staff members in Congress worked together to finalize a document entitled 'Clarification of the Basic Education Earmark' that pushed the sector closer to a focus on formal primary education, but still allowed a full range of programming. Formal primary education remained at the center of the strategic approach, but there was no political support to focus on specific activities and outcomes.

2005 was a time of major administrative changes and approaches toward international foreign assistance by the Bush administration. The Freedom Agenda was a pledge by President Bush to strengthen democracy and promote peace around the world, and USAID played an important role in this agenda. In a speech in November of 2005 USAID Administrator Natsios described USAID's role in this agenda, "USAID is

working closely with Secretary Rice, who I report to, and the Department of State to advance the Freedom Agenda. USAID is the lead implementer of U.S. democracy programs worldwide, implementing $1.2 billion of democracy programs in FY 2004" (Natsios 2007). A reorganized State Department, however, changed who would control the strategic planning process and budget coordination for all overseas development assistance, including for USAID. The Office of the Director of U.S. Foreign Assistance (F) was established in 2006 to provide greater coordination of the Development and Diplomacy goals of the U.S. Government. The practical implication was that USAID lost direct control of it strategy development and budgets, and this authority was now officially housed at the State Department. The Office of Education at USAID had missed a moment to define itself and set priorities. What remained was the 2005 Education Strategy that pleased no one, while the mandate to control budgets and strategic direction for basic education was moved to another Agency.

Streams to nowhere

There is an expression, 'an idea whose time has come', that Kingdon references as a fundamental, though not well understood reason why some ideas rise to the top of an agenda. Important then is also why there are ideas whose time has not come. In the case of early grade reading it was not a straightforward path to the top of the agenda. One interview described an example of a stream to nowhere in the case of Thomas Corts. In September of 2007, Dr. Corts was appointed by President Bush as the Coordinator of Basic Education in the Office of the Director of Foreign Assistance at the U.S. State Department. This position was created at the request of the U.S. Congress, which by that

time was frustrated with the lack of a strategic vision at USAID in a time of increasing appropriations for basic education. Corts was responsible for coordinating the almost $1 billion dollars in support for basic education overseas across all agencies including the State Department, USAID, and the Peace Corps. As USAID received the vast majority of this funding, he was in fact charged with developing the strategy that would guide USAID's resources.

Corts was an outsider, as the former executive director of the International Association of Baptist Colleges and Universities and former president of Samford University he did not have a career in international development, nor a history of working in the federal government. In relative isolation he developed a strategy that according to several sources recommended that over 50% of all resources be dedicated to primary grade reading as the best investment that the U.S. Government could make overseas. The report went nowhere and there is no copy to be found. There was no policy community that provided support and it was not part of an agency-wide restructuring to provide the proper environment for success. Significantly, it was finalized in the waning days of the Bush Administration, virtually ensuring that the ideas would not take root. A problem and condition had been identified and a policy proposed, but the political stream and lack of a policy community meant that those uncoupled streams went nowhere. Corts passed away in early 2009 and did not live to see that ideas have their time, and his strategy arrived at the wrong time and without a community.

Taking the initiative

In 2008, even though USAID no longer had a mandate to create sector strategies

EGAT/ED decided to, as one interviewee described, “do something by ourselves for ourselves.” In an interview the person tasked with managing the new strategy development process for EGAT/ED described how they recognized the mistakes that had been made in the past and went to the other extreme to be as transparent as possible. An outside contractor was hired to conduct a literature review and reach out to Missions though conference calls and online forums for their input. The result was a three-volume report entitled Pathways to Learning in the 21st Century: Toward a Strategic Vision for USAID Assistance in Education (USAID, 2009b). This three-volume document was used to inform the scope and priorities for the new strategy. Staff at USAID formed an Education Strategy Planning Committee with representation from across the agency, created groups to focus on sub-sectors, and had extensive dialogue with both the Foreign Service Officers and the Foreign Service Nationals that worked at USAID Missions. When mission staff were asked the question; “thinking across and within the subsectors, what should be USAID’s priorities?” the responses from the field were clear and unified:

- Asia Middle East Missions reported a need for the ability to adapt the strategy’s guidelines to their individual country context.
- Missions in Africa agreed first and foremost that their individual country context plays an important role in determining their education programming priorities.
- Missions in LAC agreed that the strategy should strive to define overarching Agency direction and guiding principles, while allowing each country to define specific priorities based on their country context.

When asked who should be USAID’s target beneficiaries, Missions responded with a broad range of answers including programs that provide opportunity for youth

employment, support for vulnerable children, and systems support defined broadly. Primary grade reading and issues of literacy were practically absent from the list of agendas and alternatives as formulated by USAID staff in Missions. The strategy planning committee also reached out to academic experts to conduct a sector and literature review to research which trends would be most likely impact education. Three sub-sectors were identified; basic education, workforce development, and higher education. Priorities were set for each sector, however the report states that the "priorities listed under each subsector are not presented in any hierarchical scheme or order of preference. Each Mission will make strategic choices based on a range of variables associated with country conditions, host country plans, funding levels, and other donor involvement" (USAID, 2009b, p. 14).

According to USAID staff members that were interviewed and participated on the education strategy planning committee, by fall of 2009 the Office of Education at EGAT produced a final draft of a new education strategy that was shared with key stakeholders including members of Congress for review, but was not shared publicly. This draft was said to be based off of the recommendations in the study and included a wide range of activities for basic education funding. The draft strategy continued the focus on support for equitable access to primary schooling in a formal setting, but allowed support for life-long holistic learning with decentralized decision making within the agency. This strategy was on its way for signature by the USAID Acting Administrator. As one person put it, "we were on the five yard line." A decision was made to hold off moving the finalized document forward for signature until after President Obama announced a new USAID Administrator. In the multiple streams model the problems identified included a

wide range of sub-sectors in education, polices identified included substantial host country input on what the most appropriate alternatives would be based on country context; now they were waiting for the third stream of politics to move the strategy forward.

Policy Entrepreneurs

In MSM, a critical component that facilitates the coupling of streams is policy entrepreneurs. They are described by Kingdon (2011) as advocates that are willing to invest their time and resources to put forward an agenda in return for future benefits ranging from financial benefits to the advancement of a proposal that will lead to better results. They need to be seen as experts, have the proper connections, and most importantly are persistent. "Entrepreneurs do more than push, push, and push for their proposals and for their conceptions of problems. They also lie in wait – for a window to open." (p. 181). A big tent of possible agendas and alternatives was full of policy entrepreneurs waiting for a window to open, and there were many high profile agendas in 2010.

Those who advocated for an increased focus on youth programming were perhaps the most visible policy community. The World Bank had published the World Development Report for 2007: Development and the Next Generation. This report highlighted the need to address the youth bulge in order to create a path for youth to become productive citizens. Youth movements were shaking up governments around the world and there was concern that not addressing the condition of unemployed and under-educated youth would lead youth to take up extremist views (World Bank, 2007). This

direct link between support for educating youth, economic gains, and increased political security was a strong argument that youth should be the next focus of an education strategy. Advocates for a gender-focused agenda were a policy community with strong support by then Senator Clinton. This community had an unfulfilled MDG for global gender equality and had an evidence-based argument that support for girl's education at any age, from pre-school to adult literacy, advanced economic growth and health outcomes. With Clinton as Secretary of State, the very person that the USAID Administer reports to in the federal bureaucracy, the community was also poised to couple the streams.

Those that wanted a focus on support for education in conflict and crises environments had formed a policy community as well. The International Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE), supported in part by USAID, began as an idea in 2000 during the World Education Forum's Strategy Session on Education in Emergencies in Dakar. This community developed guidelines for best practice, the 'Minimum Standards' for education in conflict that are widely considered as best practices for implementing programs in conflict environments. INEE supports principles of conflict sensitive education that go beyond ensuring access during and after a crisis, to ensuring that education is not used as a driver of conflict. Though the conflict agenda was a cross-cutting theme in the 2005 strategy, INEE can also be viewed as a community of policy entrepreneurs that saw the education strategy as a window of opportunity that had not quite fully opened for them.

The tent was full of alternatives, but it was reading that became the issue that rose to the top of the agenda. A technical expert at USAID for early grade reading described

their policy community. "Back in the mid 1990's a group of us began to realize that the premise of Education for All was wrong and we needed to focus on learning and not just access." Several individuals, small groups, and organizations independently were concerned by the lack of learning in classrooms even after access was gained. There had been an assumption, not just by USAID, but also from other donors such as the World Bank, that if you did teacher training and provide books that this would be enough, "the economists and the World Bank were telling us access was the problem, but the reality was that this was not the case. A lot of us started testing kids independently and realized that they can't even read or recognize letters." There was a movement that was happening both inside and outside of USAID, to focus on the acquisition of basic skills in formal primary education and to measurably improve learning outcomes. "We started building a network, putting learning outcomes on the global education agenda. The advocacy work started a long time ago and we learned that it takes a long time to get this on the agenda."

As part of that movement, the Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) was developed with USAID funding. This oral assessment provides an inexpensive method to measure the progress of children from letter recognition to fluency and comprehension. EGRA is designed to measure the most basic foundation skills for literacy acquisition in the early grades. These five skills include phonics, phonemic awareness, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension. A child is individually tested, which takes about 15 minutes, resulting in an inexpensive diagnostic test that measures not only what a child does not know, but in low learning outcome environments measures skills that the child may know, such as letter recognition, that other tests may miss. No longer would the

problem that children were not learning to read only be identified at the end of primary, with EGRA the problem was identified early when interventions are more effective. As the cost and time per child is low, EGRAs can be done as a representative sample of a region or country to provide a baseline and measure of progress for increased reading skills. A study entitled *Early Reading: Igniting Education for All, a report by the Early Grade Learning Community of Practice* (Gove, 2010) was a call for action that identified the condition that children are not reading, turned it into a problem that was holding children back from learning, outlined the use of EGRA to quantify the situation, and provided a clear set of interventions for how to solve the problem.

The early grade reading entrepreneurs were prepared, had built a movement, and now had to wait for a window of opportunity to open. They, along with the other policy communities, would not have to wait long for this window to appear.

A Window Opens

On January 7th, 2010 Dr. Rajiv Shah, appointed by President Barak Obama, assumed the office of USAID Administrator. On January 12th a catastrophic 7.0 magnitude earthquake struck Haiti. Responding to this crisis consumed the Agency for several months, but by June of 2010 the Bureau of Policy, Planning, and Learning had been established and USAID was able to assert more control over strategic planning. In the political stream "the president can dominate his political appointees, and the appointee can dominate the career civil servants" (Kingdon, 2011, p .31). As such, with the announcement of the Presidential Policy on Global Development (PPD-6) in September of 2010, it would be expected that the principles of the PPD-6 would be

implemented at USAID. The PPD-6 states that as part of a new development model the U.S. will: demand greater focus from assistance programs within countries, respond directly to country priorities, focus our expertise in a smaller number of sectors with an emphasis on selectivity and an orientation toward results, and set in place rigorous procedures to evaluate the impact of policies and programs, report on results and reallocate resources accordingly. With a political stream in placed a window of opportunity had opened where streams of problems, policies, and politics could couple and change would soon occur.

In late 2010 an education Policy Task Team (PTT) was formed by PPL for the explicit purpose of developing what became the 2011-2015 Education Strategy: Opportunity through Learning. The strategy was commissioned by Administrator Shah "to ensure that USAID's global education investments would be informed by recent Presidential policy guidance" (USAID, 2011b, p. 1). The PTT started a new strategy development process that incorporated the directives of the PPD-6 to be selective about where and in which sectors USAID will work and to allocate resources to those activities that have measurable results. The members of the PTT are listed in the introduction to the strategy and consisted of a representative from PPL, the Director of the Office of Education, and five technical experts from different parts of the Agency. The experts included a senior education advisor from the Asia/Middle East Bureau, the education lead for the Europe Eurasia Bureau, an expert in education finance from EGAT/ED, a Foreign Service Officer, a Foreign Service National from Senegal, and a representative from the PPL Office of Learning, Evaluation and Research. Notable is the lack of technical experts on the PTT in reading and literacy, education in conflict environments, and

measurement. The PTT finalized a new strategy over the course of the next several months.

The only public documentation from internal discussions during this period are comments provided by hired consultants including Rachel Glennerster, Dina Grossman, and Kudzai Takavarasha. Hired as technical experts they responded to a question raised by the PTT, "What are the most promising methods for achieving and measuring improved learning outcomes in developing countries, especially in the area of childhood literacy? Their responses, found in the Implementation Guidance under Reference Notes (USAID, 2012), focused on how to improve reading and what the available research showed for best practices based on previous studies. Case studies from Liberia, Kenya, Mali, and Ghana provided evidence of the potential for measurable impact on early grade reading outcomes. An impact evaluation from Liberia found that "compelling evidence that a targeted reading intervention focused on improving the quality of reading instruction in primary schools can have a remarkably large impact on student achievement in a relatively limited amount of time (Piper, 2011, p.1). The study provided specific activities, such as scripted lessons, that should be used for significant impact on reading outcomes. When a window of opportunity opened, the early grade reading community of practice provided the PTT with a perfect package of a problem, a solution, and a method for measuring progress.

The focus on equitable access in conflict and crisis was included, as one interviewee stated, in response to the MDGs of universal access to education not being met in conflict and crisis countries. In addition this goal was included as a response to the reality that 40% of basic education finding was going to Afghanistan and Pakistan

alone and the strategy had to reflect that budget reality. Gender remained in the strategy, but was seen as too broad to have as a separate goal. The argument made to the gender community of practice by EGAT/ED was that they were not being ignored, as ensuring that girls read is the best investment that could be made for their future. Youth did not make the agenda as a stand-alone priority and was put under the workforce development goal. Reasons for this given in the interviews was a lack of evidence that youth programs were cost-effective, there was no effective way to measure results, and no ability to take programs to scale through government systems. One interviewee commented how responsibility for youth programs was like a "hot potato" that no one office or bureau wanted to take ownership, even though youth programs were supported and funding was being requested by Missions.

The Education Strategy states; "within USAID, the PTT reached out in consultation with the Education Sector Council, regional and functional bureau representatives, education officers in field Missions around the world, and senior management in both headquarters and the field". The interviews conducted for this study show a very different picture; that it was a very closed and hurried process with not even the membership of the PTT known to many of the education staff within USAID. There were no broad-based consultations with Missions on the final draft. The technical experts within USAID were asked only very specific questions such as net enrollment rates in countries that had education programs. One representative from a regional bureau interviewed remembered being concerned that the questions asked seemed narrow, as if "the PTT had come to a decision without informing the rest of us." Another way possible of describing how the 2011 Education Strategy was developed is that the PTT

synthesized the results of the 18-month inclusive process undertaken by the previous USAID strategy design team, and then applied the principles of the PPD-6 to finalize the strategy, but without another round of broad consultations.

As in 2005, many viewed the strategy process as taken over by Agency leadership to meet strategic rather than development objectives. Interview respondents used various metaphors to describe how the strategy, as developed by the education sector since 2008 through extensive dialogue and participation, was 'killed' or "high-jacked" and in its place the newly formed Bureau for Policy, Planning and Learning formally took over the process to finalize a new strategy. Three interviews said the process was called "the black box" within USAID. Even those that supported the focus of the strategy were taken aback by the limited opportunity for comment before the draft was finalized. Those interviewed that were on the PTT understood the frustration, but argued that the tough decisions are not always driven by consensus, and that the "recently approved PPD-6 loomed large in our deliberations." From this perspective, the members of the PTT followed clear instructions provided by Agency leadership that originated in the Office of the President to produce the 2011 Education Strategy. The political stream was coupled with a problem and a policy, and at least for this moment the back and forth battle of focus versus big tent had been decided.

The Early Grade Reading community of practice had persevered and their issue was on top of the agenda. The community of practice that focused on education in crisis and conflict had been given hope that there agenda was now a high priority. In addition to the areas of focus for funding, the strategy went further than other strategies to specifically point out areas that would not be funded, such as early childhood

development and adult literacy. While some windows were opened, others were closed. Those that supported a focus on youth programs were the most disaffected by the strategy, calling Goal Two an unfunded mandate in terms of support for youth issues. The mandate was unfunded as there is relatively few higher education funds made available by Congress that can be used for youth programs, and no other sectors provided funding for youth programs. USAID would move ahead with only the two goals and corresponding time-bound numerical targets as the new direction for USAID basic education programming for the next five years.

Actions: Implementing the Education Strategy

There was unison in the interviews that the strategy had a dramatic impact in a short time on education programming. A senior manager in the E3 Office of Education described the strategy as "unprecedented in the basic education sector within USAID, the degree of focus was breathtaking, and the fact that there were specific time-bound targets with clear parameters got everybody's attention." While previous strategies allowed the status quo to continue, this strategy required an immediate and massive reorganizing of contractual agreements and mission priorities. Successful implementation of the strategy required Missions to design and/or redesign programs to have all interventions contribute to two numerical targets: reading and access. In addition to the changes in the education sector, in early 2011 Missions started the CDCS process that would shape their priorities, budget requests, and programs for the next five years. In the interviews there was concern over what would happen when Agency strategies met the CDCS process. Seven of the ten interviews brought up an inherent contradiction between having targets and

programs directed by an Agency-wide strategy and having individual Missions set strategic objectives for their country. How could a Mission, one interviewee asked, "reconcile being directed to start early reading programs by FY13 with the task of developing a country strategy based on host country conditions?"

This contradiction between top down directives and bottom up planning was recognized in the agency document entitled *Policy Directive on Agency-wide Policy and Strategy Implementation* published in July of 2011. The directive acknowledges that "a constructive tension exists between decentralized, mission-led strategic planning and a centralized, Washington-led process of setting strategic priorities for our development programs" (USAID, 2011f, p.1). This is especially true, the policy directive notes, when Agency priorities are expressed as numerical time-bound targets. This statement reiterates a central development dilemma that impacts every decision and every strategy developed by USAID. The balance is constantly shifting between U.S strategic needs and corporate directives of the agency, with development objectives as defined by research and host country priorities.

This development quandary brought out the most diverse, and the most passionate, responses in the interviews indicating that this contentious issue is not yet resolved. One perspective held that the strategy forced everybody to be strategic, to justify what they were doing in terms of learning gains, and was a long overdue cleaning of ineffective programs and approaches. Programmatic inertia as an issue was raised, which is when Mission always used similar interventions, such as teacher training, without ever reviewing what they were doing or measuring the effectiveness of their programs. The focus of the strategy finally provided USAID with an opportunity to be

technical professionals in one subject area, to do one thing and to do it right. Trainings were held on how to design effective reading programs, regional workshops on reading and access were commissioned, and a global education summit was organized in August of 2012 around the three goals. There was passion in voices of the interviewees that finally USAID could make a difference. Additionally, a reading expert questioned the over-reliance on host country priorities, "it all depends on who you ask where they they sit. If you ask a child what they need versus a minister of education the answer will be different." Most often it was the elites at the host country ministries of education that were asked what were the priorities, not the parents of children that could not read. The strategy, from this perspective, was finally an evidence-based approach to development that would produce results.

Others saw the strategy as an empty big tent, with all the complexity and potential of international development programs reduced to two indicators. One technical expert was not shy in language used when describing the strategy. "Horrified, absolutely horrified by the focus on reading. Teachers are getting murdered, schools bombed, and we're testing kids on how well they know letters?" Even though equitable access programs could be the focus of crisis and conflict environments, the focus on reading became a priority for many missions in conflict and crisis areas, even in the countries with the highest rates of children out of school. Examples were given of reading programs developed in countries with ongoing conflict such as Iraq, Pakistan and Nigeria. In these environments, the interviewee argued, it is often most critical to support secondary education to create a cadre of teachers and nurses, rather than focus on primary grades. These are the hard trade-offs that the Goal Three technical experts

believe should be driven by context, not potential contributions to targets.

This interview also highlighted the measurement and programmatic challenges created by the Goal Three targets. If INEE guidelines are followed, a conflict sensitive approach will guide programming, including supporting existing school populations in conflict areas to ensure the education system is not a driver of future conflict. In this scenario it is not the number of new learners that are enrolled that is most important to measure; it is to ensure that all education programs are conflict sensitive and effective. "You can't even find the kids that are out of school, let alone determine if they are already enrolled in school or not." Conflict sensitive education, as defined by INEE, are education programs that consider the contexts of conflict and seek to minimize the contribution to future conflict and maximize the contribution to peace. This is a development objective that requires a much more nuanced approach to education than only access or learning outcomes. The goal of social cohesion, in contrast to access, is more difficult to measure.

Interviewees noted the fear Mission staff had of not aligning to the strategy. The fear that their budgets would be cut was real, the strategy was clear on this, and they did not want that to happen. This is an example of the discipline of development that requires obedience to authority to avoid punishment. Examples in the interviews were given of a Mission that had developed a youth program supported by the host government as part of an earlier Agency focus on youth and government capacity building. This program would now be shut down. Other Missions highlighted recent research that showed educating youth was a critical issue for economic growth, but this would not be allowed. The result, according to everybody that was interviewed, was initial confusion,

followed by a variety of strategies to align projects. Many Missions did not change interventions, but changed the stated reasons for their programs to indicate that activities now support improved reading skills. Others Missions shut down existing programs and started new aligned reading programs, while Missions in Indonesia and Bangladesh opted out of basic education altogether. The Mission in Jordon continued unaligned programs as part of their CDCS, though as the exception process is not public there is no documentation available as to why Jordon continued non-aligned programming. The assumption, however, is that those countries that receive high levels of ESF funds may have a justification to have programs with strategic objectives as the overarching purpose, and not be required to design programs to meet Agency targets.

The confusion noted above is understandable given the long established norms in the Agency of decentralized decision making and programming based on country context. The 2011 Education Strategy preceded almost all of the Country Development Cooperation Strategies, thus requiring all CDCSs' to incorporate the requirements of the education strategy into their upcoming five-year plan. A CDCS, as outlined in the CDCS Guidance, is a process that requires a Mission to reflect the unique development challenges and opportunities of the country or region, have indicators to show progress, and be part of a development hypothesis expressed as a results framework. The CDCS, as the next stage in the Program Cycle after strategy development, is where the first wave of change will or will not happen. A CDCS has a topline goal for the country, no more than four Development Objectives (DOs), and below each DO intermediate results and sub intermediate results that will all contribute to the topline goal. For the education strategy to succeed required that through the CDCS process Missions that receive basic

education funds to incorporate early grade reading or access in conflict and crisis environments into their results framework.

To analyze changes made at the Mission level this research looked at 44 CDCSs that are approved and posted on the USAID website as of November 1, 2014. USAID's goal was to have 63 CDCSs completed at this time, but the 44 approved CDCSs represent a wide variety of countries and regions. Of the 44 CDCSs that have been approved, 28 countries were included in the 2015 CBJ for basic education funding or have education programs. With two exceptions, Missions that did not receive basic education funds made no explicit references to basic education or to the education strategy. The two exceptions, Cambodia and Angola, are Missions that received basic education funding prior to the strategy, but did not meet the strategy's $2 million threshold to receive basic education funds. The Mission in Angola presented a holistic approach to education reminiscent of the African strategy of 1998, while Cambodia expressed a desire to have reading programs in the future as a development imperative. A CDCS that references the importance of early grade reading may indicate a desire in the future to receive basic education funds. But, as can be the case, budget hydraulics mean that when the total funding level of a country stays the same, an increase in funding for basic education would mean a corresponding decrease in another sector. Hydraulics, in this case, illustrates the pressure that an increased budget in one sector will decrease the budgets of other sectors within a Mission. This is part of the hard trade-offs each country has to make when designing a CDCS and building a budget. Countries that previously received basic education funds but no longer include basic education in their CDCS include Indonesia and Bangladesh.

There was not a single country that continued to receive basic education funds that did not specifically reference the USAID 2011 Education Strategy and outline how their mission was aligning to the strategy. The development hypothesis, however, of how early grade reading and access would contribute to their development goals varied significantly by country. This review found five categories of Development Objectives in the CDCSs that basic education supported:

1) Stand-alone development objective: Ethiopia, Ghana, Liberia, Morocco.
2) Health and social development: Kenya, Malawi, South Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, India.
3) Economic Growth and Human Capital Development: Mozambique, South Africa, Zambia, Philippines, Georgia, Kosovo, Nepal, India, Guatemala.
4) Increased security: Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Nicaragua.
5) Good governance and improved government institutions: Democratic Republic of Congo, Senegal, Jordon, Kyrgyzstan, Peru.

To see how projects changed at the Mission level the research analyzed USAID websites for what programs have been implemented during the timeframe of the strategy. As reflected in the interviews, many existing programs shifted the narrative to early grade reading, but did not immediately implement programs with activities that could expect to show reading gains during the timeframe of the strategy. The Implementation Guidance details how activities that can reasonably be expected to improve reading outcomes will occur at the classroom-level. This includes improvements in instruction, curriculum, and provision of materials. These interventions, called the 5Ts (Teaching, Text, mother-Tongue, Testing, and Time on Task) are part of a growing consensus as the key elements that are required to improve reading (USAID, 2012). Zambia provides an example of a

USAID Mission that looks to measure the success of Goal One programs through increases in student performance in reading and math, but does not indicate either on the Mission's website or in their CDCS that there will be extensive classroom interventions. Their CDCS framework has improvements in reading and math as an intermediate result to improved human capital; interventions however focus on system strengthening, community support, equitable access for vulnerable populations, and mitigating the impact of HIV/AIDS. Other Missions, notably Ethiopia, describe national programs that have a coordinated approach to improving reading using the resources of the government and other donors. These are described as classroom based interventions and the Mission is optimistic that 75%, or 15 million out of a population of 20 million children in primary grades, will show improvement in reading scores.

The PPD-6 had worked its way into the development model for USAID, there was a global focus on early grade reading, and USAID was providing both funding and intellectual leadership. Across the USAID basic education portfolio, change was happening and many if not most countries were either implementing or designing programs that were aligned to the strategy. To measure progress, EGRAs were being conducted from Afghanistan to Iraq, from Pakistan to Nigeria, from Egypt to Honduras. By August of 2014, according to the EGRA Tracker on the EdDataII website, 59 countries had conducted an EGRA, providing a global database of the status of reading among children at the earliest grades. Ideally, to meet the needs of measuring reading improvements that can contribute to the Agency's target, an EGRA will be conducted in a sample of schools that is representative of the population where USAID has programming. These EGRAs then provide the baseline by which progress is measured.

It is not known, however, how many of the EGRAs references above will be used as the baseline to measure progress towards the Goal One target of 100 million children with increased reading skills.

This focus on reading also allowed USAID to try innovative approaches to increasing reading outcomes through *All Children Reading – A Grand Challenge for Development,* a global competition for innovative solutions to advance reading and literacy. Another example of innovation is the USAID funded web-based Early Grade Reading Barometer that allows the public to view data using interactive graphs, the tagline for the site is: Actionable Data for a More Literate World. It is still too early to know the long-term utility of this online resource, but it is an example of how a focus on a limited number of activities increases the ability of USAID to provide technical support. USAID has also formally announced funding for communities of practice for Goal One and Goal Three as a way to drive a learning agenda. In this case a learning agenda is a focused effort to have data and best practices inform program implementation and design of new programs.

New Streams Emerge

Problem and policy streams do not stop at the publication of a strategy. Kingdon's multiple streams model has a focus on setting an agenda, but does not incorporate implementation of an agenda. The very implementation and emerging political events, however, create ongoing streams in the policy process. According to the interviews, after two years of strategy implementation Goal One had been the focus of most of the discussions as well as funding. Populous countries such as Pakistan, Iraq and

Nigeria were designing reading programs even though large out of school populations still existed and conflicts were ongoing. Another impact of the strategy brought out in the interviews is the stove-piping of the goals, or creating silos for the goals, into distinct programs that did not support each other. If a program was designed to achieve reading gains within the timeframe of the strategy, then the activities had to be very focused on specific interventions for a population of students that already attended school. Whereas a program that focused on school construction and community engagement may increase enrollment, but it is challenging to implement an effective reading program at the same time.

This focus on Goal One would change as politics and global public opinion still have the power to shape an agenda and to call for action. The Education First initiative, led by UN Special Representative Gordon Brown to meet MDG 2 by 2015, and the 'Let Girls Learn' initiative as a response to the kidnapping of over 200 young girls by the Boko Haram in Nigeria in April of 2014, put access in conflict regions to the front of the agenda. Education First is a UN initiative to meet MDG 2 - achieving universal primary education by 2015. "Room to Learn" is the title of USAID's contribution to Education First and was the name given to Goal Three of the strategy as a result. In April of 2013, USAID partnered with the UN initiative in six countries including Afghanistan, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Haiti, Nigeria, Pakistan, and South Sudan. USAID's response was to support the acceleration of progress toward MDG 2 through a "close examination of USAID's ongoing and planned programs for ways to better partner, innovate, reduce costs, and maximize impact." USAID's support intended to use existing resources to improve equitable access for over 1.5 million students and increase

learning for over six million children" (USAID Factsheet, 2013). In DRC, Nigeria, and South Sudan USAID promised as part of Room to Learn that 6,121,628 children would benefit from improved education quality. A metric for how increased learning would or improved quality would be defined and measured was not included in the factsheet.

"Let Girls Learn", announced in November of 2013, is an initiative that resulted from the kidnapping of over 200 girls in Nigeria by the Boko Haram. Challenges for girls to access schools are many, including customs that favor boys, lack of a safe environment at school, and lack of sanitation as a few challenges for access. This kidnapping of girls highlighted the problem of girls' access and pushed people to act. A global "Bring Back our Girls" campaign was launched where celebrities and politicians, including First Lady Michelle Obama, held up handwritten notes with the message #bringbackourgirls. USAID responded by announcing $231 million in new programming to support primary and secondary education and safe learning in Nigeria, Afghanistan, South Sudan, and Jordan, and Guatemala. The emerging agenda aimed to retrofit or redesign programs in priority countries where these new issues were now salient. Given the speed of the announcement, less than six months after the kidnappings, these programs were most likely already designed to align to the education strategy, but reframed in such a way to meet this new agenda.

Conclusion

The research indicates that a significant shift in programming and priorities for basic education occurred in a very short period of time. This shift came in either how programs were designed and implemented, or how the goals of programs were presented.

Missions often may align with a goal through documentation, but actions taken when implementing the program may resist full alignment. This is representative of the different meaning of the word discipline, or the tension that was described between bottom up programming and agency wide numerical targets. Almost all Missions that receive basic education funding (with Jordon as an outlier) followed the strict instructions to incorporate Agency strategies and have adopted their CDCS to incorporate early grade reading or access in conflict and crisis. The approximate $3.5 billion in support of basic education over the lifetime of the strategy that previously covered a range of activities is now focused, to differing degrees, on two goals. Missions adapted existing programs to support the strategy, or designed new programs, that all measure success by achievement defined as increases in reading and math scores, or through increased access.

The actions taken by USAID as a result of the strategy show a bureaucracy that was able to adopt new strategic directions while still adapting to new challenges that arose during the strategy period. Each Mission incorporated the strategy into a CDCS and worked to ensure that the host country government would be supportive of USAID's new direction. This process also highlights the fragility of the reforms. Underneath the outward show of support and unity there are still undercurrents within the bureaucracy that are waiting for the next window of opportunity to appear that they know will come.

Accountably: Indicators, Targets, and Results

The most dramatic and visible change in the 2011 Education Strategy versus previous education strategies and policies at USAID are the numerical targets for Goal One and Goal Three. The strategy states that the numerical target for Goal One would be

"the primary target for which we hold ourselves accountable for results in basic education" (USAID, 2011d, p.10). Never before in education has USAID committed to achieving specific and measureable results in a set timeframe. As such, it is important to closely review how these targets were chosen and how they will be measured. Kingdon (2011) highlights how indicators have important implications for programming, where "the methodology by which the facts are gathered, and the interpretations that are placed on these facts, become prominent items for heated debate" (p. 94). Targets, especially time-bound numerical targets, have a direct impact on how interventions will be designed and implemented.

The education strategy is not the only USAID sector that has set ambitious targets. Power Africa, announced by USAID in 2013, has set a goal to add more than 30,000 megawatts of more efficient electricity generation capacity in Sub-Saharan Africa adding more than 60 million new household and business connections. The New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition, announced in 2012, seeks to lift 50 million people out of poverty in Africa by 2022. The USAID Strategy on Water and Development for 2013 – 2018 projects providing a minimum of 10 million persons with sustainable access to improved water supply and 6 million persons with sustainable access to improved sanitation over a period of five years. The indicators above raise questions as to what is being measured and how targets impact programming. For Power Africa, counting only new household and business connections may limit programs that repair existing connections. In the water strategy the definitions of how sustainability and improved are measured may impact programs as well. The question of how USAID will be held accountable for results is perhaps the most challenging to answer and invites

the most controversy. Results are, however, at the center of the drive for accountability, and the answer will directly impact how future strategies are designed and how results are measured.

The Policy Directive on Agency-wide Policy and Strategy Implementation (USAID, 2011f) defines quantitative targets in Agency policies or strategies as "projections of expected impact, rather than as an ex-ante global quota toward which individual countries or regions must contribute" (p.2). This definition of a target was reiterated at the presentation of the Implementation Guidance at the Globe Theater on May 3, 2012 in Washington D.C. hosted by USAID, the Basic Education Coalition, InterAction, and the Society for International Development (BEC, 2012b). When a USAID panel, consisting of technical experts, was asked if there were regional and country targets, the team lead for Basic Education at EGAT defined the targets as aspirational, and as such targets would not drive implementation. Or as was more artfully stated at the presentation, "this is not a wag the dog situation where we are expecting countries to come up with a certain number" (minute 1:36). For Mission staff this would imply that they are not given a number they are expected to reach, only that they are expected to implement programs and set up measurement systems that will deliver and count contributions toward the top-line targets.

The following analysis of targets focuses on Goal One of the strategy. The target for Goal Three is much more context dependent and therefore impossible to ascertain with a degree of certainty where conflicts and crisis will occur and what will be the impact on USAID's ability to implement programs. As such, a set of assumptions that will lead to projected results is much more difficult to configure. USAID did not provide

analytics on how the numerical target for Goal Three was initially determined, making it even more difficult to judge progress. The Implementation Guidance, updated for a second time in 2014, provides additional information that only new entrants to schooling, both formal and non-formal are considered part of the count, requiring and extra layer of accountability to determine who qualifies as a new entrant (USAID 2014). This definition of the indicator holds Missions accountable for designing programs that get learners into school, rather than programs that make existing schools safer, unless that can be linked to increased enrollment. How this approach to counting fits with the INEE minimum standards for conflict sensitive programming is not discussed in the Guidance.

Where in Goal One some level of stability can be assumed, Goal Three by definition is in unstable environments making projections that much more difficult. As an example, when the strategy was written South Sudan was not a country, and with independence in July of 2011 came hope that with a new government USAID could put in place the beginnings of an education system. In late 2013 violence racked the country and the opportunity to increase access to education during the life of the strategy was lost. In Iraq and Afghanistan the security situation has impacted the ability of USAID to implement programs, and in northern Nigeria even attending school, especially for girls, can a dangerous ambition. In these contexts, numerical targets cannot be reliable predicted. While there should be accountability for results, this research does not attempt to analyze how USAID arrived at the number of 15 million learners that are to be given equitable access to education in conflict and crisis environments and how USAID expects to account for the Goal Three total. The research does, however, analyze the target setting and issues of accountability for Goal 1.

Counting to 100 million

For Goal One, the education strategy highlights that children cannot read at alarming rates in developing countries and argues that this problem inhibits the ability of a country to have an advanced economy, a democratic society, and improved health outcomes. By improving the reading skills of 100 million children USAID can then change this negative trajectory toward better development results. Even though the goal has been described as an aspirational target of projected impact, it is important to look the analytics and assumptions used to project the target and how results are expected to be measured, as this impacts how programs are designed and implemented. The 2011 Education Strategy and the corresponding Guidance do not describe how the target was derived, but do provide some assumptions that must be in place for the target to be met. Members of the Policy Task Team that were interviewed did not shed light on the question of target setting, other than saying that when deciding on a target they were told to think big, and that it should be a "moon shot." This is known as a stretch target, where the target is beyond what may be probable, but still within the range of possible. Stretch target are objectives that may require a significant reorganization of how a bureaucracy functions as part of the change needed to achieve a goal (Thompson, 1997).

The Strategy, Guidance, and CBJs outline the extent to the problem, that 250 million children cannot read and 71 million children are out of school, but there is no explanation on how the numerical targets were derived to project expected impact. The strategy document lists several assumptions upon which the numerical targets are premised:

1) results achieved in recent years;

2) the assumption of host country commitment to stipulated targets;
3) that by 2013 education resources should be programmed to contribute to these goals and,
4) continued access to sufficient resources.

To reconstruct how the Goal One target may have been set this research looks at what information was publically available to derive the targets. For Goal One the Implementation Guidance provides illustrative numbers on the total number of children that are in grades 1-6, in countries where USAID has education programming (Appendix 7). The total number of primary grade students that could be reached if all programs in all countries where USAID has education programs are national in scale over the course of three years is 333 million. The Guidance refers to this number as the denominator, or the total number of students reached. What is then needed is the numerator, or the number of students that show reading gains. If the goal is 100 million students that show reading gains, this means that 30% of all students reached by reading interventions would need to show improvement. The Guidance gives an example of a program in Africa (country name not given) that produced a gain of 28% of students that had increased reading skills. Projecting 100 million students that show increased reading skills is then based on an initial assumption that starting in FY13 and running through the end of 2015 all students in the potential populations are reached with effective national programs focused on reading for grades 1-6 showing a rate of 30% of children with increased reading skills. This also requires that all countries have baseline data from no later than 2013 upon which progress can be based.

This does not have to be accomplished by USAID alone and can include contributions by other donors and national government. The Guidance requires Missions

to carefully analyze if reported results are a direct result of USAID interventions or an indirect result. Direct beneficiaries are those reached "through an activity funded fully or partly by USG" while indirect are defined as "beneficiaries reached through an activity that was not funded by USAID but can be plausibly attributed to USAID because USAID had an instrumental role in developing the technical approach used in the intervention" (p. 3). This indicates both the complexity of calculating beneficiaries, and the level to which USAID is attempting to be transparent in the data that is reported back to and aggregated at headquarters.

The updated Guidance provides an example using EGRA data to count Words Correct Per Minute (WCPM) as the indicator of progress. Cross sectional data is used to compare a specific grade at different moments in time (at a minimum baseline and endline), and thresholds are then set to measure changes in proportion of students above and below the threshold. If, for example, a threshold is set at 30 WCPM and 80% of students in grade two are below that threshold at the start of the intervention, then at the end of the intervention grade two is measured again and only 50% are below the threshold it indicates that 30% (80%-50%) moved across the threshold and can be counted as having increased reading skills. This proportion of 30% is then applied to the total population of students in all grades that are part of the intervention to reach a final number of children that showed reading gains. The Guidance notes that the threshold (or multiple thresholds) is not based on a performance benchmark such as a national reading standard, nor on the F standard indicator of reading according to grade level after two years of schooling. The threshold will also not be based on the indicator as presented in the education strategy of being able to read to learn. Thresholds will be set based on

some other criteria for measuring progress not yet defined.

In August of 2014, USAID released the 2011-2015 USAID Education Strategy Update to Reporting Guidance that further refines the data collection and analysis process (USAID, 2014). This update indicates that the E3 technical bureau at USAID is coordinating the count toward the top-line targets. Part of this coordination is an expectation that each Mission will provide baseline, midline and endline data by certain dates in specified formats. E3 is expecting from Missions an unprecedented level of data to account for results. Each Mission, in addition to being required to provide data sets, is required to provide written "causal logic linking USAID activities to student-level outcomes" which will then be analyzed by E3 to "to ensure that the assumptions and rigor of causal logic used to attribute outcomes to USAID are consistent across projects" (p. 18). Accountability for producing results is at the mission level, accountability for ensuring the results are consistent and valid is with E3. To ensure consistently and compliance, "statements of causal logic submitted by Missions will not be considered 'accepted' until they have been reviewed by E3/ED" (USAID, 2014. P. 18). This update also mentions USAID's "Secondary Analysis and Results Tracking" contract held by Optimal Solutions to facilitate the central collection and analysis of USAID Goal One and Goal Three data.

Progress toward Goal One

What can be demonstrated through an analysis of the CDCSs and information on USAID websites is that the initial target projections did not prove to be correct once the implementation process started. The assumptions did not include the possibility that

large population countries where USAID has programming, such as Bangladesh and Indonesia, would not start national reading programs in FY13 and instead close basic education programs. The figure of a 28% improvement is also based on a reading-focused project-based intervention, while many of the programs being implemented are not reading focused, not taken to scale at a national level, and if national in scale will not be as effective as a small program. Appendix 8 is the researcher's calculation of the expected total contributions to the Goal One target by the end of the strategy. The analysis documents a dramatic and demonstrably lowered estimate of primary grade children that will show reading gains by 2015. This review, which just looks at types and timeframes of programs along with the budget requests, estimates that the maximum number of children that could potentially show reading gains is 45 million. This number could be incorrect if there are significant contributions to the target attributed to other donors or host country programs. This analysis has transparent assumptions, factors out the countries not implementing reading programs, and suggests a lower rate of 15% of students that will show increased reading skills for those countries not implementing focused reading programs. A budget table shows the change in request levels in the fiscal years of 2011, 2013 and 2015 for countries that received basic education funds is included as Appendix 9.

Additional analysis could omit those programs that are not national in scale, programs that started after 2013, programs that focus on grades 1-3 rather than all of primary, and programs that cannot be counted because they do not have a baseline. This further analysis would result in a lowered final estimate to be well below the 44 million of the initial calculation. These analyses are based on a series of assumptions, but the

assumptions are identified, allowing for an accounting of results that can be questioned and interpreted by future researchers. That is a characteristic of a learning agenda: important is not just if the target of 100 million reached, but to understand why or why not and have this knowledge inform future programs and targets.

The numerical target is just one element of accountability for the education strategy. It is important to highlight the strategic goals to have a greater focus on Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), as well as to reduce the number of countries that received basic education funds for greater impact. In 2011 the percentage of the total budget request of $850,043 targeted to SSA was $272,678, or 32% of the total, by 2015 though the actual amount of $225,453 for SSA was less, it represented a greater percentage at 42% of the total request. In 2011 the total countries receiving basic education funds was 51, by 2015 it was 43 countries, a decline of 20%. In addition, reading has been integrated into each Mission's CDCS across USAID's portfolio. While "the count" is a one-time exercise in accountability, each CDCS with basic education activities has framed basic education programming as an intermediate result or development objective that will contribute to the Mission's highest-level goal. This is where the long term and more meaningful accountability lies. Within each Mission's CDCS is a statement of cause and effect; increased reading skills is either a development objective in itself, or is an intermediate result of a development objective. Prior to the strategy the education sector was scattered across program areas, had no message, and no real story to tell. Now, if and when asked, USAID can point to a new focus of reading and how this goal is integrated into its core development strategy, as well as the strategies of individual Missions. USAID also can answer, if asked, how many children have improved reading skills. USAID may,

however, need to be prepared that the total by 2015 will be far below the projected total. What remains to be seen is first, will any accountability holder ask, and second if a lower total will be seen as a failure of USAID to implement effective programs, or of the failure of the PTT to set an evidence-based target.

Reporting to Congress

On April 8, 2014 Senator Patrick Leahy, Chairman of the Senate Subcommittee for the Department of State and Foreign Operations, gave the opening statement at the hearing on USAID's Fiscal Year 2015 budget request. He had tough words for USAID. Though offering his support for many of the reforms under the new administrator he issued a cautionary note, "I am worried about our foreign aid programs. I am worried that they are not as relevant or effective as we may think and say they are" (Leahy, 2014). Senator Leahy highlighted the need for development results that are sustainable, that local institutions including governments, civil society, and private companies need to take a leadership role, and be responsible for results. On that same day Representative Lowey provided an opening statement for the 2015 budget hearings directed in part at basic education. Lowey remained a staunch advocate for basic education, repeating her annual disappointment that USAID underfunds education (even though this request was 6.6% higher than the previous request), and highlighting how education is the foundation of every other development goal. She also asked how USAID is partnering with the Global Partnership for Education, perhaps laying down a message that there are other options to support education if USAID does not want to take responsibility for basic education funds (Lowey, 2014).

In his opening statement, used at both the House and Senate testimonies, Administrator Shah highlighted the successes that have been achieved over the past year across all sectors. These successes included the 12 million children that received better nutrition and more than seven million farmers that had increased yields due to USAIDs' support. He highlighted the explicit targets of the water strategy to provide 10 million people with improved water supply and 6 million people with improved sanitation over the next five years. For basic education, however, the message was less specific; referencing only the "strategic shift to improving primary grade reading for tens of millions of kids," and how USAID is working to "brighten the future for millions of vulnerable children, including children in crisis environments." He closed his comments on education by adding, "these programs are not only advancing America's standing as the world's development leader in education, but are also energizing the global economy (Shah, 2014).

For the FY15 budget the education targets are expressed in explicit terms in the written CBJ submitted to Congress, but the narrative of the testimony presented by the Administrator in front of Congress had changed. This marked a muted tone from previous years when presenting the progress and goals for basic education. In prepared testimony for the 2013 CBJ the language used was "we will make sure that our assistance is focused on concrete, tangible outcomes like literacy. By 2015, we will help improve the reading skills of 100 million children" (Shah, 2012). In his 2013 testimony, both numerical targets for Goal One and Goal Three were highlighted as something USAID would achieve. The targets, so highly publicized since 2011, had been set aside in the 2014 statement. The focus on reading and access were now contextualized through

references to dramatic reading gains in Malawi, and improved retention in areas where USAID worked in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

The question that remains, and may be asked soon, is after appropriating a total of $3.5 billion from 2011 – 2015, will Congress accept that instead of having 100 million children that meet the indicator of being able to read to learn, USAID may only be able to account for a significantly reduced number of children with improved reading skills. USAID responded to the call of both the U.S. Congress and the Presidential Administration to be selective, focused, and more rigorous in program design, implementation, and evaluation. USAID has shown that through the reforms at USAID, and in the education sector in particular, the agency can account for results. But being held accountable for achieving results as promised in the strategy is different than accounting for results. To put it another way, does achieving at target provide a meaningful representation of development for those who are affected, and if not is there any reason for Congress to expect an account of progress?

Chapter 5: Summary and Conclusions

Grounded in Kingdon's multiple streams model and Behn's model of democratic accountability, this qualitative case study of the 2011 USAID Education Strategy illustrated the complex internal and external dynamics involved in setting agendas, taking action, and being held accountable for results in international development. The education strategy began with a promise that USAID will hold itself accountable for results based on a single indicator for improved reading skills. A quote attributed to Albert Einstein is appropriate here, "Everything that can be counted does not necessarily count; everything that counts cannot necessarily be counted." This research brought out that attempting to quantify results with a single indicator overestimate the ability of data to tell a story, and underestimate the totality of success that is achieved.

Results from this study demonstrate that the setting of agendas at USAID is a continuous and contentious process impacted by much more than just the context of international development and host country priorities. The setting of an agenda includes following the requirements of the U.S. Congress and the directives of Presidential administrations. It also includes incorporating the advice of advocacy groups into the choice of alternatives and using policy entrepreneurs to provide solutions. For the 2011 Education Strategy, political processes and policy entrepreneurs coupled with identified problems and conditions resulting in a dramatic shift in how basic education funding is programmed and priorities are set. The impact of the education strategy was greatly enhanced by the agency-wide reforms to incorporate sector strategies into USAID corporate practices through the stages of the Program Cycle.

However, it is still undetermined who will hold whom accountable for whose results. How USAID will be held accountable for the results of the 2011 Education Strategy and how will success be defined is still unclear, nor are the implications understood of not achieving stated targets. These are outstanding question as this strategy period comes to a close and the next stage of strategy development begins. The research showed, however, a commitment by USAID to set up the structure to measure results. As seen with GPE promises, setting a target as an attention getting device, then forgetting the target shortly thereafter can and has been done. USAID may chose this approach as the 2011 - 2015 strategy period comes to a close. This approach would be a missed opportunity to learn from the past programming and present the results in a public forum. This approach would also ignore the significant progress that has been made to meet the requirements of the PPD-6 for focus and selectivity, and the work that has been done to put in place measurement systems

The findings of this research reveal the challenges of setting an agenda for foreign assistance by an agency of the U.S. federal government. The perspective by the public can be of USAID as a monolith, impenetrable and incomprehensible. This research hopefully introduced a different perspective that the monolith is built on the backs of development professionals that must navigate the seas of constantly shifting priorities and directives while remaining committed to good development practices. The multiple streams model, when used in the context of the federal government, helps to highlight the role of each individual in ways that may have not been considered before.

The setting of targets, and the measurement of those targets, is an integral part of how priorities are set and programs evaluated. Targets for global development can be

broadly defined in two categories, inspirational and technical. Inspirational targets are framed broadly and vaguely, such as 'to ensure that all children read'. Technical targets are much more specific and often place a number to be achieved and the date for this to happen in the same sentence. Technical targets are expected to be measured and accounted for, requiring an extensive monitoring and reporting system to be in place. To measure and account for targets there are two agendas that are important to distinguish between: a learning agenda and a counting agenda. A learning agenda asks why change occurs and what can be improved. A counting agenda is designed to document that change occurred, but does not necessarily mean this agenda will answer why change occurred. Inspirational targets with a learning agenda provide the broadest set of interventions and research.

What creates the greatest challenge and leads to the counter-bureaucracy as defined by Natsios are inspirational targets that require a counting agenda. Rather than a focus on learning, a counting agenda for an inspirational target requires programmatic compliance to achieve results within a specific timeframe, even though achieving the targets are beyond reach. The counting agenda then does not serve a development purpose; it does not contribute to learning; in contrast it is an exercise in bureaucratic futility. William Easterly (2006) could not have been more prophetic when he wrote how a lack of historical memory inhibits people from learning from their mistakes, causing aid agencies to "keep throwing in more and more resources to try to reach a predetermined, although unattainable, goal" (p.200).

What has not been done in the recent global education sector strategies, including at USAID, is the formulation of a technical target that is derived from extensive research

and has a base of specific assumptions that can be monitored and reassessed during implementation. A valid technical target is based on the understanding that a target cannot be set until measurement systems are in place and a baseline is determined. This type of target would not be set at the beginning of a strategy period, but be a milestone of progress of strategy implementation. A valid technical target can inspire a learning agenda by asking not only if the target is met, but also why it was or was not met and what was learned in the process. A technical target, however, that does not inspire a call for action may discourage investment and serve as a reminder of the difficulty of measurable progress. For these reasons a clear distinction needs to be made between these two types of targets and measurement systems.

The current set of targets put forward by GPE, DFID, the World Bank, and USAID only serve to confuse what expected to be achieved at how it will be measured. For example, the following set of targets for the 'Learning for All' metric have all been declared as something that will be achieved, often within a set timeframe:

World Bank

- % of countries (or beneficiaries in countries) with increases in measured learning or skills since 2010 (or since the earliest available baseline).

Global Partnership for Education

- Cut in half the number of non-readers in at least 20 countries over the next five years" (by 2015).
- Reduce by 50% of number of grade three children that cannot read in 20 counties by 2015.
- The proportion of students who, by grade 3, demonstrate that they can read and understand the meaning of grade-level text."
- In 66 eligible countries "an increase of core reading and numeracy skills

by 25% (from 16 to 20 million between 2014 and 2018)."

USAID

- Improved reading skills for 100 million children in primary grades by 2015.
- In DRC, Nigeria, and South Sudan - 6,121,628 children benefitting from improved education quality.

All of these indicators require extensive systems to gather data, and data collection is a step that should not be an afterthought. Testing takes time away from classroom learning, uses school and system resources, and requires expensive training if implemented through host country systems. In countries such as Tanzania, Tajikistan, or Honduras, where all the major donors are implementing programs in basic education, a host country will have to facilitate data collection on some or all of these metrics. This is an unnecessary burden being placed on host countries in order to meet donor requirements for continued funding.

The results of this research do not only apply to USAID, but can help inform the development of the UN Sustainable Development Goals that are expected to replace the MGDs' at the end of 2015. The Synthesis Report of the SDGs' of the Secretary-General, published in December of 2014 entitled *The Road to Dignity by 2030: Ending Poverty, Transforming All Lives and Protecting the Planet*, highlighted that in order to "realize the sustainable development agenda, we also need measurable targets and technically rigorous indicators" (UN 2014, p.37). The report emphasizes the importance of shared commitments and universal norms, and shared rules and evidence. For the post-2015 agenda there are 17 specific goals with 169 associated targets for the SDGs. For Goal Four, to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning

opportunities for all, there are 10 proposed targets including:

4.1: By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes.

4.6: By 2030, ensure that all youth and at least [x] per cent of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy.

The goal statement is phrased as an inspirational goal, and if it stays inspirational with no expectation that it can be either measured or achieved, then it can serve its purpose to emphasize the global agenda to a wide audience. If, however, there is an expectation that this goal can be measured and achieved through use of the proposed indictors, then technical experts will spend the next 15 years discussing how to measure the terms relevancy, free, and effective that are embedded in the indicator.

The education target for literacy that is yet to be quantified, the [x] percent of adults that should achieve literacy by 2030, is another technical target that needs a learning agenda to determine the value of the [x]. It would be a mistake to determine this value at without having the measurement systems in place. If the past is an indication of the future, those in a position of power to decide on a target will not have the patience to allow a learning agenda to determine a target value and will instead opt for an inspirational target supported by a counting agenda. Worse yet will be if political imperatives require that a date and a numerical target be developed to show dramatic impact in a short period of time based on this goal and these indicators. This will result in yet another soul-searching conference five years hence where world leaders once again gather and ask why the goals are so far out of reach, and ask themselves what went so wrong before sitting down to formulate a new set of equally unrealistic targets.

What is needed is a clear separation of politically generated aspirational and

inspirational targets that can be used to focus attention on the scope of the challenges faced, and technical targets that can inform progress. There needs to be consensus around a single indicator that can be used to measure progress over time, even over decades, meaning that progress should not be expected based on a single intervention. After reviewing targets that have been used and proposed the following inspirational target and two indicators are recommended for the primary grade "Learning for All" agenda:

- Achieve universal primary grade literacy and numeracy for all children.

This will be measured by the following two indicators:

- The proportion of students who, at the end of grade 3, demonstrate that they can read and understand the meaning of grade-level text as defined by national standards.
- The proportion of students who, at the end of grade 3, demonstrate that they have achieved a minimum level of numeracy as defined by national standards.

Grade three is recommended as a compromise grade; the end of grade two may be too soon for students that have to be first socialized to school and the process of learning to already be tested. The end of grade four misses the moment of opportunity to reach children while they are still in primary school and the cost-effectiveness of an intervention becomes greater. There would be no ability to set targets in the initial years as the first step would be to create national standards and set up measurement systems. These targets are in adequate in for many individuals and environments. They do not incorporate the unique challenges of learners with disabilities, nor would they would ni conflict zones where learning is interrupted. But within this understanding of limitations,

each country can decide on standards and metrics, creating the opportunity for empowerment if it is a country-led process. The results would not be comparable between countries or between languages, but would offer a consistent measure over time on progress of the primary school system irrespective of donor motivations, or pronouncements of political appointees that expect dramatic change in a short period of time. At the moment, the global community seems far from such clarity, instead the existing and proposed targets straddle the aspirational and technical divide, without satisfying the needs of either.

USAID, as part of a federal bureaucracy, is required to incorporate a host of federal rules, regulations, and shifting priorities into the Policy Cycle. The ALDAC sent by the State Department exemplifies the challenging environment of multiple stakeholders and multiple processes that are setting agendas. This is just the environment within the bureaucracy of U.S. Government. At each mission, as indicated in the CDCS process, education programming is one part of a complex relationship with the host country government. Finding the appropriate mix of programs that meets the multiple agendas, and does so in a sustainable way, is not an action that can be easily quantified, if it is possible at all.

In the counter bureaucracy, where the compliance side of the agency is at odds with the technical side, a target can skew priorities in favor of those that are charged with controlling compliance. Though the targets are to be met through sustainable programs, none of the attributes of a sustainable program are captured in the time-bound numerical targets of the strategy. If it matters that the host country does not continue reading programs after donor funding ends, then this needs to be part of a Goal One indicator for

success. If it matters that children leave school after a short period because the curriculum is hateful towards their ethnic group, then this needs to be part of the indicator for Goal Three. Indicators matter, or at least they should, and therefore no comprehensive development objective can be based off of a single point of data. What is left is a messy mix of programming that for Goal One will have classroom interventions and well as auxiliary objectives, such as support for school finance to make sure teachers are paid and come to teach, and training for school administrators to ensure a school is well manages and safe for children. The challenge for USAID is to find the balance of accountability and flexibility, and to build trust with their accountability holders.

Another lesson learned is that change takes time, and that the factor of time needs to be incorporated into planning. The 2011 Education Strategy was developed in less than six months, but the Implementation Guidance to over a year to finalize. The contracting mechanisms used to support Goal One and Goal Three, Assistance to Basic Education All Children Reading and Assistance to Basic Education: Access for All, were only awarded in the summer of 2014 and will continue until 2019. Missions that use these mechanisms to start new programs will only award a new contract to meet the goals of the strategy after the current period strategy has ended.

In democratic contexts there is an accountability process between holdees and holders of accountability. If at the end of the strategy period the total number of children with improved reading skills is significantly less that 100 million, and the Agency reports that Goal Three was too complex to count, how should USAID be held accountable and what would this look like? That is a question that this research raised but cannot yet answer. Based on potential failure to achieve this single numerical target in a complex

environment should funding be withheld or moved to a different sector that can produce better results? This research illustrated that the answer to this questions depends on the lens that is used by the accountability holders. USAID did meet the call from both Congress and the President to be selective, to focus, and to measure results. USAID can account for why it did not meet the 100 million through a step by step analysis that demonstrates that the real issue was the unrealistic setting of the target. This target however, unrealistic or not, helped define a problem and energized a sector to find solutions. The target raised awareness to the extent of the problem and inspired people to action. These results may not have happened without a clarion call for action.

If Congress decides that when a federal agency goes to them year after year requesting funds to reach a numerical target and they expect that target to be reached, then there could be serious repercussions for not meeting a stated target, even if it was meant to be aspirational. With the expected departure of Administrator Shah in February of 2015, in spring of 2015 the acting USAID administrator will have to go in front of the U.S. Congress requesting funds for basic education, this time for FY16 funding that extends beyond the life of the strategy. This would be a good moment to exhibit that USAID is a learning organization that can separate out a counting agenda from a learning agenda and an inspirational target from a technical target. It is an opportunity to showcase the leadership role taken by USAID to set the post-MDG agenda to focus on a Learning For All agenda. USAID could highlight that education programs contribute to a broad development strategy at each mission, and that education funding supports a development hypothesis and not isolated projects. In this perspective, the actual number of children with improved reading skill or learners that are provided access during this set

timeframe becomes secondary to a true learning agenda. USAID could also research the implications of not funding certain areas such as early childhood education and secondary education; this is also an implication of a focused strategy. A true learning agenda would look at the context of support for early grade reading and the trade-offs that were made. As this is a continuous process of agenda setting, policy formation, and implementation, lessons learned could be used to couple the many streams that still flow independently for the next education strategy.

In the context of international development, where results depend upon a host of actors from individual nations to donors, to schools, USAID cannot be held accountable in the traditional sense for reaching a target. What they can be held accountable for, and in the case of the Education Strategy still have yet to prove that they are doing, is measuring results and learning as an Agency.

Implications for the Conceptual Framework

Kingdon's multiple streams model follow policy changes over time in a dynamic and chaotic environment. For this research the model was able to explain behaviors of a federal agency and of the people within the agency that move issues and agendas forward. The streams identified in MSM through initial research on transportation and health in the U.S. Government also flowed and coupled at USAID. In the case of USAID, when other donors and host country priorities are factored in, it complicates what appeared as a simple modeling of known actors. MSM follows the stream to the point when an authoritative decision is made and does not follow streams through the chaotic waters that flow into the next time the multiple streams are coupled. An

important implication for the model is that streams do not stop when they couple. The coupling of streams is a marker of progress and of a moment in time, but the problems, policies, and politics identified as part of setting the agenda do not pause during implementation. For researchers that use this model it is important to view the streams as flowing from somewhere in the past and leading to a point in the future, not as between fixed points in time. This use of streams over time can give a richer picture of what happens at a given moment, and could be used to predict which issues will rise to the top of an agenda.

The use of the democratic accountability model links the decisions that are taken as part of one coupling of streams to the implications this creates for the next MSM analysis. In MSM, the issues of accountability are absent precisely because the model does not follow the implementation of decisions. Accountability, however, is a part of how issues are defined and agenda's chosen. USAID's agendas and actions could be impacted by empowering recipients of U.S. foreign assistance with the role of accountability holder for genuine shared responsibility. If a key stakeholder is given the role of accountability holder, their ability to impact the multiple streams increases. As the literature pointed out, rarely if ever in a setting of global compacts and donor driven priorities can a host country hold a donor accountable, but doing so would allow more meaningful participation in the process of setting the next agenda.

Recommendations for Future Research

This research only looked at the deliberations and relationships at the USAID headquarters in Washington D.C, the interactions with the U.S. Congress, and a review of

CDCSs and projects developed at USAID Missions overseas. Each of the CDCSs provides a development hypothesis of how basic education will lead to broader development outcomes. Within each CDCS are streams of programs, policies and politics that drive the selection of alternatives. Each CDCS, or a comparative study of several CDCS's, would provide valuable information on the tension that is faced at the Mission level to incorporate global targets with local priorities. A review of other sector strategies with time-bound targets, such as the USAID Water and Development Strategy could provide a comparative analysis of how multiple streams and accountability impact development across sectors. Participants in the interviews suggested topics for research as well. A long-term civil servant wanted to better understand the role promotions played in implementation of the strategy, arguing that career officers will implement the strategy if it serves their career objectives regardless of how well the approach meets development objectives. Another suggestion was to look at the extent to which Goal One and Goal Three were able to integrate at the project level, or did the strategy amplify stove piping of projects. Finally, as the strategy comes to a close, following the transition to the next strategy and analyzing how USAID is held accountable and how this accountability impacts future programming will provide insights not just for targets set by USAID, but for the post-MDG targets as well.

Conclusion

Education is firmly on the global agenda as a development priority. In the last several years multiple donor organization including USAID, GPE, the World Bank, and DFID have committed to supporting education. Specifically, a commitment to ensuring

that access to education means that children in primary grades learn, and continue to learn throughout their lives. At USAID education was added as a core development objective that is, for now, protected by an annual congressional earmark. This is a time for optimism, but not a time for complacency. The challenges set out in the USAID education strategy, of a generation that is not learning and conflict and crisis preventing tens of millions of children from receiving an education, are still development challenges that existing resources cannot solve. The hypothetical family in the village described in the introduction still cannot send their children to school, and the global development challenges such climate change, health, and food security still impact their lives. The debate of how best to program limited resources and be held accountable for results shows no sign of abating.

This research showed that the tension of global compacts with host country priorities has yet to be resolved and that USAID continues to struggle to incorporate this tension into their development model. The research indicated that setting numerical targets motivates attention and action, but has also served to exacerbate this tension between compliance and flexibility, and between global agendas and local priorities. The next set of global targets for the Sustainable Development Goals is being developed and should be finalized by the end of 2015. Now is the time to take a close look at how global targets are set, how this impacts development options, and how to create the change that is needed to improve the lives of people in all corners of the world.

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Appendix 1

Overview of the Congressional Budget Justification Foreign Operations FY 2010 Budget Request

(http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/123415.pdf)

Basic Education

Summary

U.S. foreign assistance for basic education is defined broadly to include all program efforts aimed at improving early childhood development, primary education, and secondary education (delivered in formal or informal settings to children, youth, or adults), as well as training for teachers working at any of these levels. There is great latitude for support to meet country priorities and complement other donor support in country and U.S. programs stress the importance of aligning behind country-driven strategies, including education sector plans and priorities. This focus on country-driven plans reflects the ongoing concerns and interests of the White House to expand global education to focus on the quality and relevance of basic education, serve the education needs of out-of-school youth and measure learning outcomes and results. For countries in crisis that may not have a national education plan, the FY 2010 request provides basic education resources to help ensure that all learners master basic skills. These programs will all be monitored and reported on using the basic education indicators in the FACTS Info system managed by the Office of the Director of U.S. Foreign Assistance.

Basic Education Funding Summary

($ in thousands)	2010 Total	2010 Total without PL 480	DA	ESF	AEECA	PL 480
TOTAL	**1,001,332**	**980,64**	**363,723**	**604,947**	**11,978**	**20,684**
Africa	288,500	270,37	192,727	77,644	-	18,129
Angola	1,500	1,50	1,500	-	-	-
Benin	2,724	2,72	2,724	-	-	-
Burkina Faso	7,629	-	-	-	-	7,629
Burundi	1,500	1,50	1,500	-	-	-
Democratic Republic of the Congo	16,500	13,000	-	13,000	-	3,500
Djibouti	1,300	1,30	1,300	-	-	-
Ethiopia	36,800	36,80	36,800	-	-	-

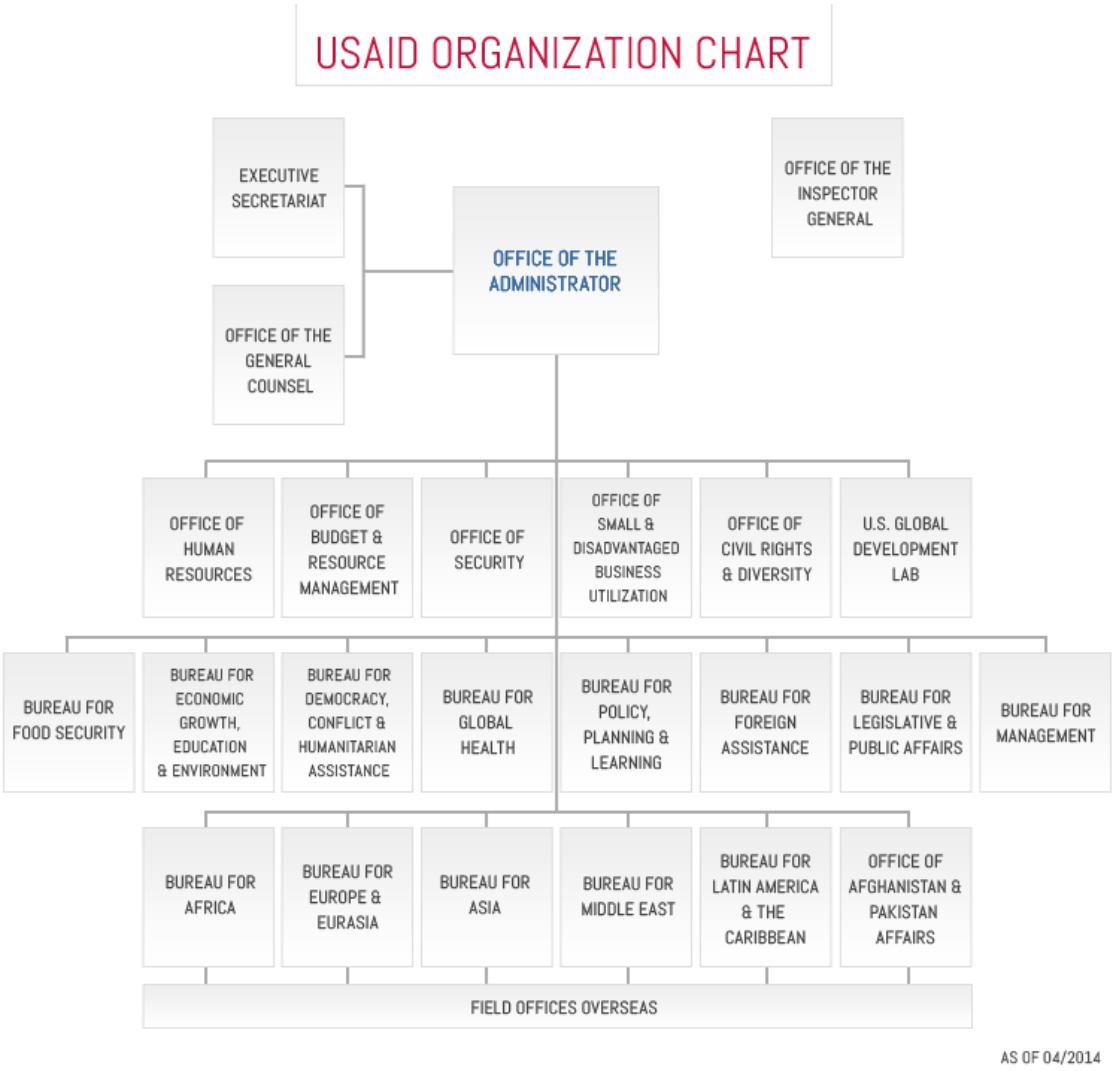
Ghana	23,400	23,40	23,400	-	-	-
Guinea	1,028	1,02	1,028	-	-	-
Kenya	6,295	6,29	6,295	-	-	-
Liberia	36,544	36,54	-	36,544	-	-
Madagascar	1,500	1,50	1,500	-	-	-
Malawi	8,000	8,00	8,000	-	-	-
Mali	18,635	18,63	18,635	-	-	-
Nigeria	14,000	14,00	14,000	-	-	-
Rwanda	1,500	1,50	1,500	-	-	-
Senegal	9,700	9,70	9,700	-	-	-
Somalia	2,000	2,00	-	2,000	-	-
State Africa	550	550	-	550	-	-
Sudan	32,550	25,55	-	25,550	-	7,000
Tanzania	9,127	9,12	9,127	-	-	-
Uganda	6,500	6,50	6,500	-	-	-
Zambia	6,750	6,75	6,750	-	-	-
USAID Africa	41,363	41,36	41,363	-	-	-
($ in thousands)	2010 Total	2010 Total Without PL 480	DA	ESF	AEECA	PL 480
East Asia and Pacific	**61,762**	**61,76**	**57,862**	**3,900**	**-**	**-**
Burma	2,850	2,85	-	2,850	-	-
Cambodia	1,556	1,55	1,556	-	-	-
Indonesia	43,406	43,40	43,406	-	-	-
Philippines	12,900	12,90	12,900	-	-	-
State East Asia and Pacific Regional	250	250	-	250	-	-
Europe and Eurasia	**7,700**	**7,70**	**-**	**-**	**7,700**	**-**
Georgia	1,200	1,20	-	-	1,200	-
Kosovo	2,500	2,50	-	-	2,500	-
Macedonia	4,000	4,00	-	-	4,000	-
Near East	**155,985**	**155,98**	**18,500**	**137,485**	**-**	**-**
Egypt	50,000	50,00	-	50,000	-	-
Jordan	49,000	49,00	-	49,000	-	-
Lebanon	16,985	16,98	-	16,985	-	-
Morocco	6,500	6,50	6,500	-	-	-
West Bank and Gaza	9,500	9,50	-	9,500	-	-
Yemen	12,000	12,00	12,000	-	-	-
Middle East Partnership	12,000	12,00	-	12,000	-	-
South and Central	**382,196**	**382,19**	**5,000**	**372,918**	**4,278**	**-**
Afghanistan	74,844	74,84	-	74,844	-	-
Bangladesh	5,000	5,00	5,000	-	-	-
Kyrgyz Republic	1,800	1,80	-	-	1,800	-
Nepal	1,500	1,50	-	1,500	-	-

Pakistan	296,574	296,57	-	296,574	-	-
Tajikistan	1,878	1,87	-	-	1,878	-
Turkmenistan	500	500	-	-	500	-
Uzbekistan	100	100	-	-	100	-
Western Hemisphere	**61,224**	**58,66**	**45,669**	**13,000**	**-**	**2,555**
Dominican Republic	4,500	4,50	4,500	-	-	-
El Salvador	8,000	8,00	8,000	-	-	-
Guatemala	6,000	6,00	6,000	-	-	-
Haiti	12,555	10,00	-	10,000	-	2,555
Honduras	9,700	9,70	9,700	-	-	-
Jamaica	1,969	1,96	1,969	-	-	-
Nicaragua	2,500	2,50	2,500	-	-	-
Peru	4,000	4,00	4,000	-	-	-
State Western	3,000	3,00	-	3,000	-	-
USAID Caribbean	2,000	2,00	2,000	-	-	-
USAID Latin America and	7,000	7,00	7,000	-	-	-
Asia Middle East	**27,800**	**27,80**	**27,800**	**-**	**-**	**-**
Asia Middle East	27,800	27,80	27,800	-	-	-

($ in thousands)	2010 Total	2010 Total without PL 480	DA	ESF	AEECA	PL 480
Economic Growth Agriculture and Trade	**15,515**	**15,515**	**15,515**	**-**	**-**	**-**
Economic Growth Agriculture and Trade (EGAT)	15,515	15,515	15,515	-	-	-
Office of Development Partners	**650**	**650**	**650**	**-**	**-**	**-**
Office of Development Partners	650	650	650	-	-	-

Appendix 2

USAID organization chart and description of the Offices and Bureaus most relevant to the USAID Education Strategy



USAID Offices and Bureaus most relevant to the education strategy are described below:

- *The Administrator (AID/A)* formulates and executes U.S. foreign economic and development assistance policies and programs, subject to the foreign policy guidance

of the President, the Secretary of State, and the National Security Council.

- *The Office of Budget and Resource Management (BRM)* is responsible for strengthening resource planning and budget decisions to prioritize investments that are informed by policies, strategies and the expected impact on outcomes.
- *The Bureau for Policy, Planning and Learning (PPL)* is responsible for leading the Agency's policy planning efforts, shaping overall strategic and program planning, ensuring the Agency's evolution as a learning and evaluation organization.
- *The Bureau for Economic Growth, Education and Environment (E3)* provides a central Agency focus for the design, review, coordination, and evaluation of worldwide activities. Within E3, the Office of Education (E3/ED) mandate spans the policies and programs involved in providing all educational services at the basic, secondary, and tertiary levels, and the Basic Education Team (E3/ED/BE) manages mechanisms for global field support and provides technical expertise and guidance to the field and USAID/W Bureaus on the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of basic education policy, planning, and programs.
- *Regional Bureaus* design, implement, and evaluate regional and country strategies and programs, within each Regional Bureau is an education technical team that is responsible for working directly with overseas field missions to provide technical support and lead the implementation of the USAID Education Strategy. Regional bureaus take the lead supporting Missions to develop their CDCS.
- *Field Offices Overseas (or Missions)* are located within the U.S. Embassy or a related field office. For any large education program there will be a Foreign Service Officer (FSO) with a support team of Foreign Service Nationals that manage contracts and agreements, coordinate with the host country government, and work with the USAID staff in Washington DC. The USAID missions are under the authority of the U.S. Ambassador for that country and work in collaboration with other USG offices also housed at the Embassy.

Appendix 3

USAID Policies and Strategies

As of November 1, 2014. See: http://www.usaid.gov/results-and-data/planning/policy

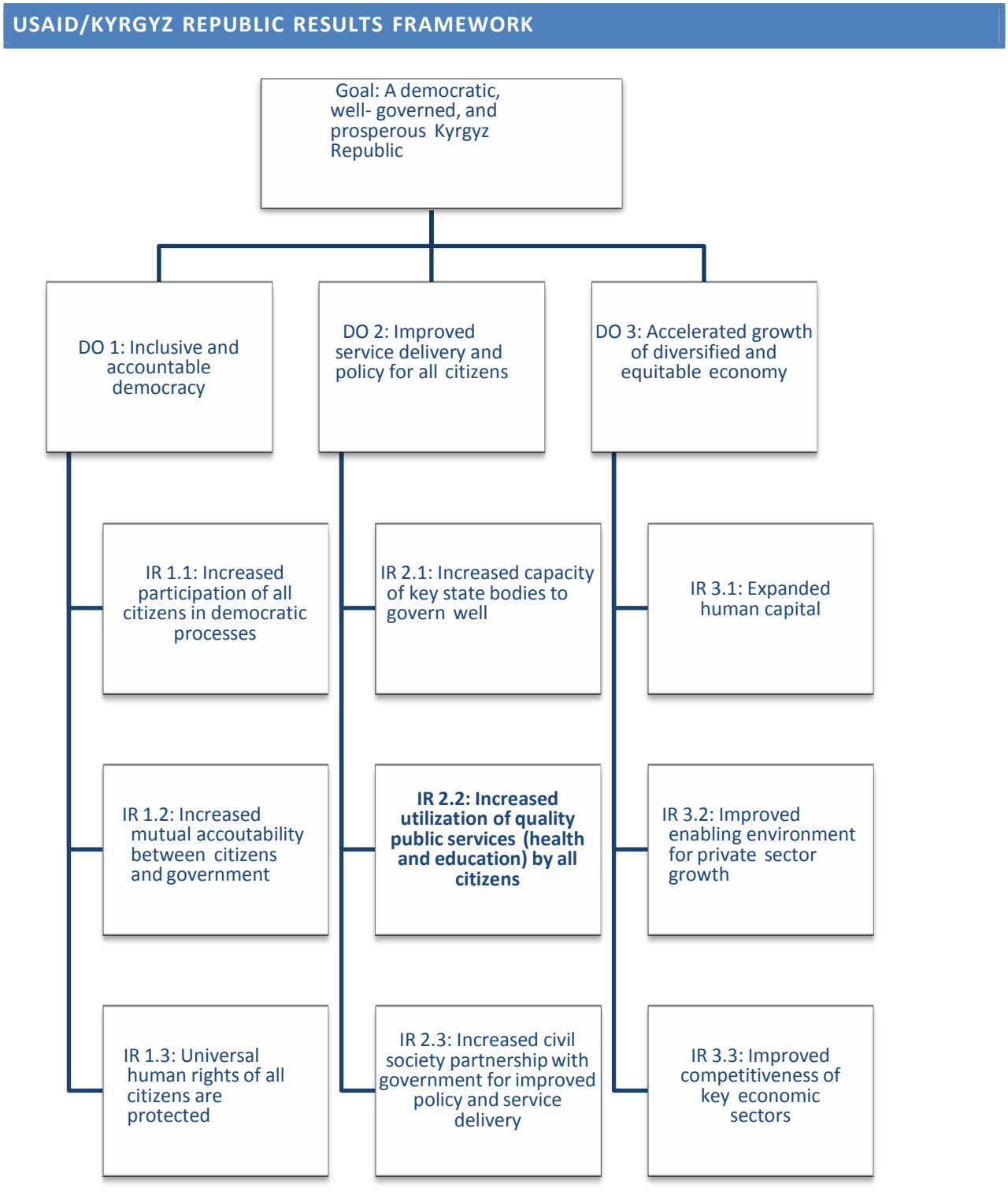
The USAID Policy Framework 2011-2015 provides staff and partners globally with a clear sense of core development priorities and translates other far reaching documents into more detailed operational principles. The Framework also explains how USAID applies to these principles across the portfolio.

The Agency has developed policies and strategies to clarify the Agency's corporate position in key areas and provide Agency-wide guidance to the field. These include:

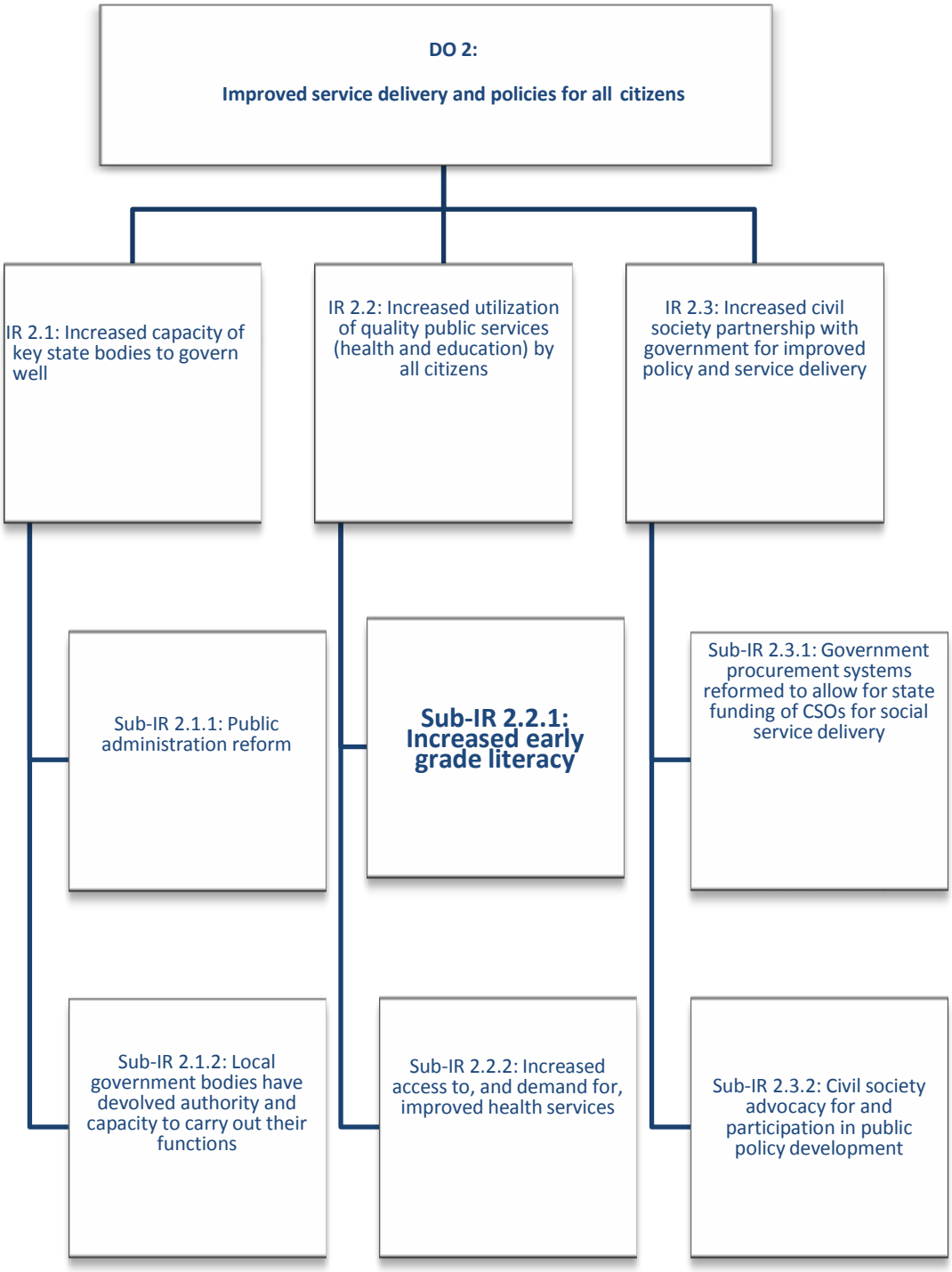
- Sustainable Service Delivery in an Increasingly Urbanized World
- Democracy, Human Rights and Governance Strategy
- Evaluation Policy
- Education Strategy
- The Development Response to Violent Extremism and Insurgency Policy
- Global Climate Change and Development Strategy
- Gender Equality and Female Empowerment Policy
- Youth in Development Policy
- Resilience Policy
- Water
- Sustainable Service Delivery in an Increasingly Urbanized World
- Local Systems: A Framework for Supporting Sustained Development
- LGBT Vision for Action: Promoting and Supporting the Inclusion of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Individuals
- Multi-Sectoral Nutrition Strategy

Appendix 4

Example CDCS Results Framework



DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVE 2: IMPROVED SERVICE DELIVERY AND POLICIES FOR ALL CITIZENS



Appendix 5

House Appropriations Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Holds Hearing on the Proposed Fiscal 2013 Appropriations for the U.S. Agency for International Development

LOWEY:

Thank you very much and welcome, Dr. Shah.

While USAID represents only a tiny portion of our annual budget, its motto from the American people speaks volumes about the kind of nation we are and what we still aspire to do. The agency's work promotes stability of overseas and reduces the threats we face at home.

This year's request continues the Obama administration's investment in USAID as the premier development agency in the world. Under your leadership, USAID has become more impactful, more innovative, where projects are based on evidence and implementation is focused on delivering measurable results. We all appreciate your efforts to ensure that each and every dollar appropriated by Congress is spent wisely and effectively.

While we could talk for hours about the many areas of focus case in USAID, I want to highlight four areas that I hope you will discuss today.

…….

Finally, I remain extremely troubled by this administration's failure to prioritize basic education.

We know the facts. A child born to an educated mother is twice as likely to survive to the age of 5. Personal learning increase 10 percent for every year of schooling an individual receives. A girl who conceives a basic education is three times less likely to contract to AIDS.

In Sub-Saharan Africa, a focus on girl's education could boost agricultural productivity by 25 percent. And each additional year of schooling of a country's population reduces the country's chances of falling into civil war by 3.6 percent.

As this number is made clear, education directly impacts every development priority of this administration, from poverty reduction to improvements in agricultural production to decrease maternal and child mortality.

I've worked for a decade now to increase funding for education and I certainly appreciate our Chairwoman's support for education because I do believe it's the key to making our development efforts successful and sustainable. And I hope that you will explain today why this year's request is to drastically underfund these critical programs. Thank you.

Again, I look forward to your testimony.

SHAH:

Thank you very much. Thank you, Chairwoman Granger, Ranking Member Lowey, and members of the Committee. I really do appreciate and I'm honored by the opportunity to present the FY '13 budget request for USAID today.

……..

LOWEY:

Thank you. And thank you, again, Dr. Shah.

I mentioned in my opening statement I just made that this administration continues to deprioritize education. As you know, USAID approved a new education strategy last year with important goals around literacy and access to education and conflict countries.

And success for that strategy will require meaningful resources. But instead, we've seen the budget request for basic education dropping each year. In fact, the President's request for basic education dropped by $230 million between FY 2010 and FY 2012. We need to be doing more, not less to offer quality basic education to the world's children.

If we know how to get results and how important this basic education is to our success and every other important U.S. priority, why aren't we investing resources in this sector and how can we succeed in democracy promotion, maternal health or economic growth if children are growing up illiterate with no basic literacy and math skills?

And again, if there is demonstrated needs and we're having difficulty programming basic education funding bilaterally, why not put more through channels such as the Global Partnership for Education? So, frankly, it's been mystifying to me that despite the great needs that exist, there hasn't been a greater demand for missions for education programs.

Could the formulation of the policy framework and the CDCS guidance be desensitizing missions to develop education program? And why isn't it one of USA's core development principles? Not just to say the Feed the Future and all these other programs aren't important, but I don't get it.

SHAH:

Well, thank you, Representative.

I agree with you that education and basic education and girls' education in particular is a core necessary condition for effective long-term development. We know that and you have been a passionate advocate for that point. There's also tremendous amount of data to substantiate that as an absolute central pillar of success.

That's why when we started the process of restructuring our strategies and looking at getting better outcomes, we started with education. It was the first strategy we launched. And we recognized quickly that a lot of what we were doing was investing in teacher training without

measuring results.

And that's why we put in place in consultation with the Congress' strategy that helps measure outcomes at grade levels, we created a rigorous but rapid and low cost testing structures so we know our kid's learning.

The three quick things we're trying to do to address this, make it more of a priority, the first is partnership. We made the first ever commitment to the global partnership. This past year, we will continue to do that in an effort to build a multilateral mechanism that drives much more resources into a sector that needs it.

The second is partnership in countries. In countries like Pakistan and Haiti and other places, even where we don't have very large programs, we are active, sitting at the table, getting other donors to pay for things and using our resources where we think we add value like on testing, literacy outcomes, and the quality of curricula.

LOWEY:

I just see the yellow light. So before we conclude, why is when -- that if you all think it's so great, and I attended the education session which was spectacular, why isn't it one of the core development goals when everyone agrees it should be?

SHAH:

It should be. And...

LOWEY:

Why isn't it?

SHAH:

We had a focus that was focused on identifying the core goals for where we have significant resources to make investments and that's why the policy framework lays out those seven areas. Those are our biggest budget items. And education is not one of the biggest budget items.

But it should be and it will be when we revise our policy framework, as well, water and sanitation which we also took an approach that I will admit I was so focused on ensuring that we focus and drill down and really concentrate on where we have the resources to be the dominant global player that we didn't do enough to make visible our core commitment to build education and water.

Appendix 6

Interview Protocol and IRB approval

This interview is about your views of the USAID Education Strategy for 2011-2015, particularly your role, if any, in the development and implementation of the strategy, how the Strategy has impacted your work, and how the Strategy related to other processes in USAID Program Cycle such as the development of a CDCS, and how the numerical targets impacts development priorities and the implementation of the strategy.

The interview should take about one hour. Your participation is completely voluntary and you may ask to stop the interview at any time. You may also request not to answer specific questions and we will move on to the next question. Or you have ideas that are important that are not covered by the questions you will have an opportunity to provide additional feedback during the interview.

You will later be provided a summary of the interview and have a second opportunity to answer in written form an additional set of questions to further clarify your responses.

To ensure I accurately capture your ideas and your words, I ask permission to record this interview. Only I as the researcher will have access to the recording. Your responses will be kept private and remain confidential and will be in no way identified to you. With your permission may I now start recording the interview?

The following biographical questions will be asked of the interviewee if not already known, or if any clarification is needed:

Question 1: What is your current position at USAID? (or other organization if not USAID)

Question 2: For how long have you worked for USAID? (or for other organization)

Question 3: What is your primary role in your work: contract management, program implementation, program design, monitoring and evaluation and/or other?

Thank you – we will now start the interview….

Interview Questions

Introductory question

- What role did you play in the development of the current USAID Education Strategy?
- If no role then – What was your reaction when you first read the strategy?

Transition question

- Could you explain how the Education Strategy has changed how priorities are discussed and decided upon at USAID?

Key questions

1. How were agendas determined for the USAID Education Strategy?
   - Is there consensus behind the strategy?
   - If not what are the causes of the lack of consensus?
   - What are the challenges to achieving consensus?

2. Have programs and priorities changed at USAID because of the strategy
   - Can you give examples of what has changed? Or what ahs not changed?
   -
3. How have the numerical targets impacted the implementation of the strategy? What are the positive and negative implications of having targets?

   What would be the implications of not reaching the targets?

Closing questions

- What are the most important changes that you have observed at USAID since the approval of the Education Strategy?
- Other than the three goals as identified in the strategy document, what other problems or challenges in your view does or should the education strategy address?

Follow-up questions will be asked, when appropriate, to gather further information on perceived changes. If a respondent asserts that changes have taken place, they will be asked how they think the strategy has contributed to those changes.

Debriefing

I would like to thank you for your participation. I also want to restate that what you have shared with me is confidential. No part of our discussion that includes names or other identifying information will be used in any reports, displays, or other publicly accessible media coming from this research.

Finally, I want to provide you with a chance to ask any questions that you might have about this research. Do you have any questions for me?

The IRB: Human Subjects Committee determined that the referenced study is exempt from review under federal guidelines 45 CFR Part 46.101(b) category #2 SURVEYS/INTERVIEWS; STANDARDIZED EDUCATIONAL TESTS; OBSERVATION OF PUBLIC BEHAVIOR.

Study Number: 1205E14181

Principal Investigator: Garth Willis

This e-mail confirmation is your official University of Minnesota HRPP notification of exemption from full committee review. You will not receive a hard copy or letter.

This secure electronic notification between password protected authentications has been deemed by the University of Minnesota to constitute a legal signature.

The study number above is assigned to your research. That number and the title of your study must be used in all communication with the IRB office.

Research that involves observation can be approved under this category without obtaining consent.

SURVEY OR INTERVIEW RESEARCH APPROVED AS EXEMPT UNDER THIS CATEGORY IS LIMITED TO ADULT SUBJECTS.

This exemption is valid for five years from the date of this correspondence and will be filed inactive at that time. You will receive a notification prior to inactivation. If this research will extend beyond five years, you must submit a new application to the IRB before the study's expiration date.

Upon receipt of this email, you may begin your research. If you have questions, please call the IRB office at (612) 626-5654.

You may go to the View Completed section of eResearch Central athttp://eresearch.umn.edu/ to view further details on your study.

Appendix 7

As included in the Education Strategy Implementation Guidance technical notes

Illustrative Country Numbers of Primary Grade Students for Goal 1

Country	Grade 1 students	Total primary students	Total potential students	EGRA done
Pakistan	4,923,765	18,175,802	28,02	X
Jordan	141,781	4,864,350	5,14	
Egypt	1,702,015	9,988,181	13,39	X
Sudan	931,880	4,351,957	6,21	
Indonesia	5,523,325	24,498,266	35,54	
Liberia	130,406	539,887	800,699	X
Ghana	741,603	3,625,178	5,10	X
Iraq	1,006,833	4,864,350	6,87	
Lebanon	74,331	817,160	965,822	
Ethiopia	4,144,686	13,379,059	21,66	X
Mali	376,507	1,823,087	2,57	X
Nigeria	3,856,534	21,632,070	29,34	X
Haiti	...			X
DRC	2,756,274	9,973,365	15,48	X
Senegal	351,079	1,618,303	2,32	X
Tanzania	1,416,855	8,626,825	11,46	X
Kenya	1,268,098	6,868,810	9,40	X
Yemen	725,441	3,282,457	4,73	X
Mozambique	1,131,559	4,899,652	7,16	X
Zambia	504,969	2,909,436	3,91	X
Honduras	261,623	1,276,495	1,79	X
West Bank and Gaza	98,280	390,051	586,611	
Malawi	880,407	3,197,928	4,95	X
Uganda	1,897,114	7,963,979	11,75	X
Morocco	748,940	2,878,640	4,37	
Guatemala	626,282	2,500,575	3,75	X
Somalia	144,482	457,132	746,096	
India****	2,342,400	10,389,593	15,07	
Philippines	2,907,459	13,411,286	19,22	X
Peru	613,090	3,854,764	5,08	X
Bangladesh	4,283,094	16,001,605	24,56	X
Rwanda	680,117	2,190,270	3,55	X
El Salvador	185,017	993,795	1,36	
Dominican Republic	225,689	1,333,468	1,78	
South Africa	1,122,114	7,231,660	9,47	X
Jamaica	49,435	315,129	413,999	
Cambodia	504,021	2,340,606	3,34	X
Macedonia	24,010	115,082	163,102	
Kyrgyzstan	98,710	399,833	597,253	
Nicaragua	252,931	944,341	1,45	
Afghanistan	811,282	4,887,528	6,51	X
Benin	411,579	1,601,146	2,42	
TOTAL	**48,280,686**		**333,165**	

**Includes all primary year 1, plus new grade 1 classes years 2 and 3, same size as grade 1 class in year 1.
Assumptions: Countries and other donors will fund a good portion of intervention costs.
****The grade 1, total primary, and potential students for India is calculated for 2 states where USAID may engage

Appendix 8

Illustrative projected number of children with improved reading skills during the USAID Education Strategy period from 2011- 2011. The computations are based on the following assumptions by the researcher that:

- In countries where USAID has education programs there were interventions that supported early grade reading results for grades 1-6 in FY 13, 14 and 15.
- All countries had a representative baseline for reading skills conducted during FY 13
- Countries with focused reading programs at the national level are able to measurably account for 30% of students having improved reading skills
- Countries with education programs that sought reading gains though non-direct interventions (capacity building as an example), and/or were not national in scope or in countries with instability still have results, but at a lower percentage. For the purpose of this exercise it will be estimated that 15% of students have increased reading skills

The totals below use student population data presented by USAID, a review of the priority given to education in the CDCS, any descriptions of reading programs on the website of each USAID Mission, and budget requests for each year of the strategy. Base on this analysis countries are given either a 30% expected gain or 15%, are shown not to have education programming, or are projected targets based on information provided on the Mission website. The final total is the highest expected total for results toward the Education Strategy targets for Goal One.

Country	Target Population millions	CDCS Goal 1	CDCS Goal 3	CDCS / Budget / Program review	30%	15%	Total # with reading gains
Pakistan	28,023,332	x	x	Website sets a goal of 3.2 million			3,200,000
Jordan	5,147,912	x		Activities not aligned with strategy		x	772,187
Egypt	13,392,211	x		Instability has made it challenging to implement programs		x	2,008,832
South Sudan	6,215,717	x	x	Room to Learn target for improved quality			1,246,178
Indonesia	35,544,916			According to CDCS no Basic Education programming			0
Liberia	800,699	x	x	Focused on Goals 1 and 3	x		240,210
Ghana	5,108,384	x		Focused on Goals 1 and 3	x		1,532,515
Iraq	6,878,016	x		No education programs			0
Lebanon	965,822	x	x	Limited reading		x	144,873

				programs			
Ethiopia	21,668,431	x		Reading focused national program	x		6,500,529
Mali	2,576,101	x		programs limited due to instability		x	386,415
Nigeria	29,345,138	x	x	Room to learn target for improved quality		x	3,000,000
Haiti		x	x	No data			0
DRC	15,485,913	x	x	Room to learn target for improved quality		x	1,875,450
Senegal	2,320,461	x		Mixed programs, not focused on reading		x	348,069
Tanzania	11,460,535	x		Goal 1 indicators, mixed programming, not national		x	1,719,080
Kenya	9,405,006	x		Focused Goal 1 programs	x		2,821,502
Yemen	4,733,339	x	x	Challenging environment		x	710,001
Mozambique	7,162,770	x		Goal 1 programs, support for OVC		x	1,074,416
Zambia	3,919,374	x		Goal 1 programs, activities not reading focused		x	587,906
Honduras	1,799,741	x		Focused goal 1 programs	x		539,922
West Bank and Gaza	586,611	x		Mix of Goal 1 and 3		x	87,992
Malawi	4,958,742	x		Focused Goal 1 programs	x		1,487,623
Uganda	11,758,207	x	x	Goal 1 indicators, programming with health and conflict		x	1,763,731
Morocco	4,376,520	x			x		1,312,956
Guatemala	3,753,139	x	x			x	562,971
Somalia	746,096		x	Conflict only programming			0
India ****	15,074,392	x		Piloting programs in several regions		x	2,261,159
Philippines	19,226,204	x	0	Website says at least 1 million will improve			1,500,000
Peru	5,080,944	x		Phasing out of Education		x	762,142

Bangladesh	24,567,793	0	0	No education programs in CDCS, No Education on website			0
Rwanda	3,550,504	x		Goal 1 reading programs	x		1,065,151
El Salvador	1,363,829	x	x	Mix of Goal 1 and Goal 3 security programs		x	204,574
Dominican Republic	1,784,846	x		Goal 3 security programs		x	267,727
South Africa	9,475,888	x		Goal 1 indicators, mixed programming, pilots		x	1,421,383
Jamaica	413,999	x		Phasing out of Education		x	62,100
Cambodia	3,348,648			No education budget			0
Macedonia	163,102			No Education budget			0
Kyrgyzstan	597,253	x		Focused goal 1 reading program	x		179,176
Nicaragua	1,450,203	x	x	Goal 3 programs with some goal 1 targets		x	217,530
Afghanistan	6,510,092	x	x	Goal 1 and 3, challenging implementation environment		x	976,514
Benin	2,424,304			Phased out of Education			0
Countries not listed							
Djibouti				very small numbers			
Georgia				very small numbers			
Kosovo				very small numbers			
Nepal	4,000,000			Focused reading program, but not national programs		x	600,000
Tajikistan	1,000,000			Focused Goal 1 programs	x		300,000
TOTAL	**333,165,134**						**43,740,813**

Appendix 9

Basic Education Congressional Budget Justification levels for FY 11, 13, and 15

Country	Target Population millions	FY 11 Budget request (in thousands $)	FY13 Budget request (in thousands $)	FY15 Budget request (in thousands $)
Pakistan	28,023,332	190,000	50,000	25,000
Jordan	5,147,912	49,000	49,000	45,000
Egypt	13,392,211	43,000	7,000	13,000
South Sudan	6,215,717	25,500	30,000	26,500
Indonesia	35,544,916	35,000	22,983	1,000
Liberia	800,699	25,000	26,000	19,572
Ghana	5,108,384	28,850	26,484	20,000
Iraq	6,878,016	11,333	30,496	0
Lebanon	965,822	20,272	5,086	10,721
Ethiopia	21,668,431	21,000	18,900	18,000
Mali	2,576,101	18,635	1,800	10,000
Nigeria	29,345,138	15,000	14,000	23,000
Haiti		10,000	10,000	15,700
DRC	15,485,913	12,000	11,904	22,592
Senegal	2,320,461	13,000	9,500	6,500
Tanzania	11,460,535	11,500	13,000	10,000
Kenya	9,405,006	11,000	11,000	11,861
Yemen	4,733,339	12,000	5,000	5,000
Mozambique	7,162,770	10,000	6,000	7,000
Zambia	3,919,374	10,000	6,400	4,843
Honduras	1,799,741	9,700	9,874	10,700
West Bank and Gaza	586,611	9,500	7,000	9,500
Malawi	4,958,742	10,000	4,500	9,000
Uganda	11,758,207	7,600	8,650	8,073
Morocco	4,376,520	6,500	4,500	4,500
Guatemala	3,753,139	6,000	6,044	6,500
Somalia	746,096	5,000	4,000	11,268
India (target regions)	15,074,392	0	2,500	3,600
Philippines	19,226,204	10,450	4,500	8,000
Peru	5,080,944	4,000	1,000	1,500
Bangladesh	24,567,793	5,000	2,000	3,000
Rwanda	3,550,504	5,000	5,000	7,290

El Salvador	1,363,829	5,000	4,000	4,818
Dominican Republic	1,784,846	3,184	3,460	4,000
South Africa	9,475,888	0	2,500	3,500
Jamaica	413,999	1,969	2,000	0
Cambodia	3,348,648	1,556	0	0
Macedonia	163,102	4,000	0	0
Kyrgyzstan	597,253	1,800	3,000	3,000
Nicaragua	1,450,203	2,500	500	2,000
Afghanistan	6,510,092	75,000	55,250	82,000
Benin	2,424,304	4,557	0	0
Countries not listed				
Djibouti		1,650	1,700	1,384
Georgia		1,200	2,000	1,098
Kosovo		1,510	0	2,000
Nepal	4,000,000	1,500	0	1,000
Tajikistan	1,000,000	2,174	3,800	3,800
Barbados and Eastern Carribean		2,000	2,000	2,000
TOTAL	**Population 333,165,134**	**FY 11 Budget request $760,440,000**	**FY 13 Budget request $494,331,000**	**FY 15 Budget request $488,820,000**